

CITIES & CITIZENS OR BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN



BY THE AUTHOR OF
"A COLONY OF MERCY"





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BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A COLONY OF MERCY

OR

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CITIES AND CITIZENS

OR

BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN

"The home was founded before the Church, and you in Britain stand more in need of homes than you do of churches."

D. L. MOODY.

"In the rookeries and slums an Imperial race cannot be raised."

LORD ROSEBERY.

CITIES AND CITIZENS. .

OR BRITAIN'S . .
NEXT CAMPAIGN .

By the Author of
"A COLONY OF MERCY"

[Julie Sutter]

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1901

Dedicated

TO

THE CHIVALRY OF GREAT BRITAIN

Not as an Indictment

But as a Plea

This Book not being Prompted by Despair

But by a Great Hope



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CITIES AND CITIZENS

OR

BRITAIN'S NEXT CAMPAIGN

INTRODUCTION.

THE PROBLEM AND PLEA.

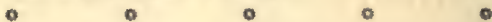
“Righteousness exalteth a nation.”—*Prov. xiv.*, 34.

THE year 1900 will be known to coming generations as one of the beaconlights in British history, but whatever the judgment of posterity concerning its aims and their outcome, it will be famous for one thing: believing their country's interests to be at stake, men in wondrous loyalty have risen by the thousand, the English, Irish, and Scotch alike bleeding bravely for its honour.

We are sobering down now, the price paid was heavy, and returning from the dearly-bought ends of the Empire, a man may well survey his homeland. After all there is no place like home, and having made such an effort for our prestige abroad, let us see if we cannot do something of the sort within our own borders. Granted that we are an Imperial people; we ought to be, for our privileges are great; and if another burst of patriotism, like the one witnessed lately, yet for other aims, could leave its impress on the country's records, we might indeed win advantage for ourselves and good report among nations.

The South African war, in more senses than one, was a

national test ; its lessons will cost us some spelling yet ; for the present purpose the salient point is this : the whole of the Uitlander population of the two Republics, whose grievances roused us to such enormous exertion, is under 200,000 ; our own " Uitlanders," the " Overcrowded Fifth " of London, *are five times as many.*



We have left our much thought-of nineteenth century behind us, and Britons will naturally twine their reflections around what is justly called the Victorian Age of Progress. Memories are still fresh of the Diamond Jubilee, and it will be remembered how it swelled the nation's heart with a pardonable pride. There never was a time as good as ours to live in, folk think—rightly enough in some respects. Leaving aside mere material gains, 'twere a shame and a pity if a closing century did not find us a little wiser, a little more just, and more mindful of the great aims of humanity than was the case a hundred twelvemonths ago ; for a nation, even as individual man, is meant to grow in grace with its years.

This departing age, then, has indeed earned our gratitude ; we may well leave it with praise and thanksgiving, welcoming the rising twentieth century in an expectant mood of hope and faith. Yet like the ostrich in the desert we are, perhaps, hiding our heads where we ought to see danger. The country's greatest problem is ever haunting the wakeful, is present now amid grateful retrospect and hopeful forecast. One gets accustomed to a standing trouble ; and in these days of empire-making the home clouds have dropped below our horizon, but they are sure to rise again, storm-filled.

It so happened while the nation was rejoicing over African victories, the writer turned over some sketches jotted down chiefly under the fresh impressions of the last great frost (January and February, 1895), and in very eyesight of the sufferings it brought upon some of our humbler fellow Britons. These bits of writing have been biding their time—which, somehow, was not these last few years, when the eyes of Britain were in the ends of the earth rather than in the country's own troubled purlieus; the time may be now when, surely, we would leave old wrongs behind and enter clean-handed upon a new century. Heavy winters, with their accompanying distress, come upon the country at greater or lesser intervals with persistent faithfulness, and the problem of the poor is with us always, nay, growing in gravity from year to year. Destitute people in our great cities are found starving every winter, but take the Parliamentary Return published at the beginning of the Jubilee year, and you will find for 1895 *seventy-one deaths registered in London, directly due to. or directly accelerated by starvation.* These starved-to-death human beings were mostly women, widows or poor spinster bodies over fifty, and the Return specially declares, not only that these seventy-one victims had none of them applied for, or received, relief (under the Poor Law presumably), but that only in a very few instances their starving could be brought home to any self-neglect. One case is entered as a widow, dying alone in her lodging—starved, from not earning enough. Another dies from the effects of a sufficient meal, provided by some kindly hand after prolonged deprivation. And in this way seventy-one of our fellow creatures—women mostly—

have died in our proud metropolis, a city of plenty, at the end of this progressive nineteenth century, at the close of a prosperous record reign, have died in their miserable tenements, or were found dead on the inhospitable street, and who *does* take note of the dreary fact besides the public Recorder ? It was the year of the black frost—what of that ? Black frosts will come again, and are we prepared to meet them ? The Return, being “Parliamentary,” will have been quoted by most of the daily papers, must, therefore, have been read by hundreds of thousands. How many of these readers have sat down to their dinner that day with a sting in the heart ?

And think what is behind such starvation, how many years of “never enough to eat” till death at last comes to satisfy ! Think how many hundreds and thousands of half-starved lives go, so to speak, to the making of these seventy-one deaths ! What never-stilled cravings, what hungry miseries, what tears the Parliamentary Return knows nothing of, but which surely are recorded by the unseen angel !

If seventy-one horses had died in London, “starved to death” in the year of grace 1895, I think we should all have gone to St. James’s Hall, or somewhere, to enter our shocked protest ; the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals most certainly would bestir itself. But among all the thousand societies, Christian or philanthropic, which are the boast of this country, there is none successfully preventing the starving of lone widows and spinsters, none effectively protecting the poor from the cruelties of under-pay and overwork. The single word “competition” has to cover what otherwise were our guilt. As Carlyle long ago

has pointed out, horses are too costly for starvation ; it is only human folk who are so plentiful that we can afford to let them starve, and need not so very much care !

There is on record the story of a horse which once rang up the city for its relief. It happened in this way. In a certain city—long before telephone days, and in a simpler age than ours, when every wronged or distressed citizen had a personal claim on the authorities—"in that city," says an old chronicle, "they had a belfry, and in the centre of the belfry was hung a rope, which through the never-closed door, by day or by night, anyone might touch who had a true grievance." For in that good city (witness the belfry) not everyone was merciful and just. At any rate there was an old horse, which, having grown blind and useless in its master's service, was turned adrift by that master. It strayed hither and thither awhile, and chancing presently through the open belfry door, caught hold of the rope-end in its blind search for food. It happened to be night-time, and peal upon peal broke upon the still hours, straightway bringing the magistrates to the spot, only to find a blind old horse chewing away at that rope-end. But they understood. The cruel master was found and fined ; and that horse, until it died a happier death than starvation, never again had cause to ring up the city for its relief.

Now, the one and sole object of this book is to "ring up the city," and for this purpose it is catching hold of every available rope-end. This is how so many subjects have been crowded together in these pages—each of which were a theme for a special volume—the land question, the drink

question, the bad housing of the masses, the money-making propensities of this Imperial country, the more or less Christianity of Christian people—all these beside the subject proper: the question of relief to any starving or half-starving poor. These subjects are just so many rope-ends for ringing up the nation; ringing up the Churches; ringing up every man or woman with a conscience that can be rung up; ringing up—aye, why not? the great Queen herself — — thus I had written: but on the very day on which this page comes back to me from the printer the Good Queen has gone from us! Her sun has set—beneath a lowering sky, indeed. A hopeful people says loyally, Long live the King! And one London daily, at any rate, has had the heart of grace to point out that “even under an almost Republican constitution like ours our new King can place himself at the head of any movement that is humane and progressive . . .” Ah, yes, if one but dare hope that with a new century, and a new reign, a *new heart* will be given to this great nation, and that both King and People together will strive for a solving of Britain’s Gravest Problem!

This book, at first sight, is full of “Socialism,” even of revolutionism, but the writer hopes she is not going to be called names. There is a saying about just now that “the social questions are in the air”; people say so when they want to excuse their half-curious, half-interested knowledge of socialistic principles; but, indeed, it only means that the time has come when the social problems must be faced. Time and tide wait for no man, and the “time” of social progress certainly will not wait for any comfortable laggards, who, never having known an hour’s starvation

themselves, are afraid of keeping abreast with things, lest the swelling tide carry them out of their depth, more properly speaking, out of some of their fond illusions. Yet let it be understood from the outset that no socialism is pleaded for in this book other than that which, as Paul has it, teaches "every man to seek another's wealth," i.e., well-being. It is curious how full the New Testament is of this sort of socialism !

Looking over some newspaper cuttings, I have come upon a letter from Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace showing the fearful increase of British poverty and its attendant miseries, despite the vast sums spent by official relief and public or private charity, which letter should certainly not be left on a forgotten newspaper file. It is addressed to the *Daily Chronicle* of March 5, 1895, and I here give a few extracts :—

"Many, however," says Dr. Wallace, "will accept neither alternative (i.e., the workhouse or voluntary death), and thus week by week, winter and summer alike, large numbers die in their miserable attics or cellars, either from direct starvation or as the inevitable result of long-continued deprivation of all the conditions essential to a healthy existence. *And all this goes on in the midst of the ever-increasing wealth and luxury of the upper classes, of which it is really the logical sequence.*"

The italics are the present writer's.

When the great British thinkers begin to lay their finger upon the national sore, an unpretending book like this may come forward the more fearlessly with its message. The writer ventures to quote a little more of Dr. Wallace's letter :—

"The actual facts (of British poverty and its appalling increase), if they could but be brought home to the public

mind, would serve as a veritable 'handwriting on the wall,' denouncing the rottenness of our whole social system. The younger generation of workers whom we have been educating and enfranchising are beginning to ask why these things are. The time has come when our legislators and politicians *must* grapple with the fundamental causes which permit this mass of unspeakable human misery to continue in one of the richest—if not the richest country in the world. If they persist in shutting their eyes to the facts, or in declaring that they have no remedy for them, they will assuredly bring about their own destruction as utterly incompetent rulers.

"To myself, the rapid spread of Socialism affords the only gleam of light amid the prevailing darkness. Socialists, at all events, believe that in a rich country, with an industrious and skilful population, no man, woman, or child should either die of starvation or linger out a shortened life, as millions now do, in degradation and misery. They know that the labour expended each year, if properly applied and organized, would not only provide necessaries and comforts for all, but would also allow of ample leisure and a full rational enjoyment of life; and they are convinced that it is *not* beyond the wit of man (as our present legislators would have us believe it is) to bring about this result. They are for the most part young, energetic, and earnest, and they have a great and inspiring ideal for which to work. They will, doubtless, make mistakes, and meet with unforeseen difficulties, but every mistake corrected and every difficulty overcome will only the more surely point the way to ultimate success. The state of society is now so bad, so utterly rotten, that it cannot well be made worse. A continually increasing flood of charity has left things just as bad as it found them. Legislation on the old lines, of ameliorating symptoms without touching causes, has utterly failed.

"The social problem should now be the one great subject of discussion and future legislation. It must be dealt with on principles of fundamental justice rather than, as hitherto, of a narrow expediency. The most fundamental and far-reaching principle is that which has recently been set forth as in the direct road of social evolution—that in a country

claiming to be free and civilized equal opportunities for maintaining life and securing happiness should be afforded to all. Let the people demand assent to this great, and simple, and just principle from all who offer themselves as their representatives, so that legislators of the old school may give way to more hopeful and more earnest men. Thus alone will any real progress be made."

Two days after Dr. Wallace's letter a fearful story appeared in the papers of a working man, a hard-working man and an abstainer, thrown out of employment that terrible winter, yet manfully striving to keep his wife and seven children out of the workhouse, and succeeding, God knows how, and with what starvation, till influenza laid him low; going to seek work again before half-recovered, and then, in utter despair, one night cutting his wife's throat and the throats of his six hungry little children, finally, in his mental agony, cutting his own throat, his eldest boy of fourteen alone escaping the appalling tragedy to tell the tale. That his mind was temporarily unhinged, what of that? Was not the influenza the "last straw?" And are there not thousands of similar strugglers? This in the richest country and the wealthiest city in Europe! Britannia may well hide her head, weeping for her people.

We are said to be evolving along some upward line, and the next stage of national development surely should be a state of affairs when deaths from starvation shall be impossible among us. We might leave that to the ill-taught heathen, to whom we send missionaries. Winter after winter we are shocked by a distress more or less poignant, according to the bitterness of the season, and if King and People could rise in a national effort for truly

mending the lives of the poor, Britain's greatness might take a new start.

For no one should doubt that even in the mildest of winters there is enough of privation, cruel privation, in all our great cities to be a standing witness against our well-fed selves. The only difference is that in so-called black winters our poor neighbours' cup of wretchedness runs over—running over into our presence, as it were—and then we cry out, "What is to be done!" The hunger of hundreds and thousands of the poor is an appalling fact, God knows! Only they are used to it, poor things, and we—yes, we are hardened to it!

It will not be forgotten how the sweet and gracious Princess thought of a Jubilee dinner for the "poorest of the poor," that their life long they might have cause to remember the Victorian diamond day. It was a noble thought; but however carried into effect, it could never save any seventy-one of the recipients from starving to death the very first winter an inclement season sets in. Still, from this very dinner one's vision travelled to a whilom king, a good king, who had the ambition, and worked for it, that in his kingdom every subject on a Sunday should have a fowl in the pot. A humble enough ambition, yet to realize it among ourselves would require nothing short of a revolution in present-day England! More concretely speaking, Slumland would have to be swept away before the fowl became possible. Quite a Socialistic ambition therefore, yet it was only a good king's own royal ideal.

I once saw a man taken up for stealing a fowl from a poulterer's shop front. It was a day or two before

Christmas, when we all look for a good dinner, a raw, hungry day too, and the poor fellow looked pinched enough. He was promptly given in charge, and marched to the station by the policeman. Of course he was; and rightly so, for society has to protect itself—that prosperous society which made him. But that man hasn't an idea that stealing is wrong—how should he? That man never knew what it is to grow up in a decent home: his mother probably never knew, his father probably was as untaught and wretched before him, with not a thought but the prime law of nature to pick up food somehow. Have *you* ever known the pangs of hunger? Have *you* ever known what it is to be entirely homeless? Then go and cast a stone at this man. Yet it is quite right for society to seize him and take him before a magistrate; for society must protect itself and uphold the law.

Our poor do not all steal, some only drink—what is to prevent them? Preaching temperance and proclaiming the “blue ribbon” is very good, but it is only dealing with an *effect*. There is a *cause* behind—the miserable homelessness of the people. To be sure they drink—what is to keep them from it?

I wish to impress a fact upon the country. Nowhere on earth is the love of home so strong as with us. “Home, Sweet Home” is the key to all that is noble and pure and beautiful in this nation. “Home” is the Englishman's castle; it is the cradle of his manhood, of all that is worth having in the race. And Englishmen know that. They are proud of their home-life, and rightly so, for there are no nobler homes on the face of the earth than the homes which yield the true Englishman, the true Englishwoman

—a race not surpassed anywhere for sterling qualities. But Britain has kept her home blessings for the few. What has she done to make them possible for the million? Thanks to the British land system there is not a more homeless race than the masses of our prosperous country. Even the red Indian has his wigwam, which is his *own*, but the cottage homes of the United Kingdom for *own-ness* are a myth, a fiction. The land belongs to the few, and the people having none of it, unable, therefore, to make a living on the land, have drifted to the cities. For generations they have thus drifted, the result being that vast individual want, called collectively “the unemployed,” which is fast growing to be a national punishment for a national sin.

“Men of Rome,” said a Tribune of the people to the legions—“Men of Rome, you are called the lords of the earth, but you own not a square foot of its soil.” Mark, when a Roman tribune could say this, Rome, for all true worth, was on the down grade, ending with the loss of her lordship, because her love of wealth (which somehow always means the undue luxury of the few at the expense of the multitude’s hunger) had made her unjust to her own people—her “masses,” as we should now say.

Britain, too, has had a “lordship” over nations, and despite her Imperial ideals, some think it is slipping from her hold—possibly for a similar reason. History always repeats itself, and there is a law of retribution which is sure to find us out.

The “Homelessness” of our masses, then, is not a figure of speech. It is a deep-seated canker destroying the vitals of the empire! Go about the streets of London and look

into the faces of the hopeless poor. They are starving for the bread which perisheth, but there is a deeper starvation behind.* Their humanity is crying out for a "bread" denied them for generations. What moral fibre do you look for, you home-loving Britons, in a man, a woman, coming of a stock which for generations never knew the meaning of Home? What is a home if not a place bound up with the traditions of family life? That little word *own* must be seen smiling from its threshold. It is but a little word, but it makes a race! They never knew it. They are born in a miserable tenement, crowded with wretched beings, surrounded by crime and filth—what moral backbone do you look for in them? Science has taught us the meaning of "environment" as a race-producing factor. What, then, can we expect from the environment we have somehow allowed to be the seed-bed of the people?

It is this Homelessness, this adriftness of the masses, which underlies the social trouble of this country. It is an extraordinary thing how the people have been swept off the soil in Britain. We are told they cannot nowadays make a living on the land; but they could, if you gave them fair play—that little word "*own*" would do it. They cannot at present, and the country in the end is the loser. Surely those who are in a position to do something, for love of their country, if not for love of the people, should address themselves to this root of the evil and strive with might and main that a tide of charity—nay, of justice—may rise in an opposite direction. We owe to these starving outcasts an effort to prevent more starving outcasts being born and reared for want of that environment in the poor man's life we call "home." Let true patriots

consider if it is not possible somehow to re-people the land, not, of course, with tenants, but with Own-Home folk, and see if the congestion of the great cities will not die a natural death. It would mean new life to the nation.

How is it to be achieved ? Well, we would not here suggest to force any landowner to part with any of his land to the people. Even Socialism—taking that word in its fullest, truest meaning—has to grow. The world sooner or later, if not of its own free will, then by dire experience, will be ready for a larger development, and the land question, in due course, will be settled. In the meantime there are other influences, even preparatory leadings. There is the teaching of history ; there is the teaching of the great strikes ; there is the still, small voice whispering, *Do unto others as you would they should do unto you*. Candidly, would any of us like to be so homeless ? Is it not possible that some generous member of the landed class may come to be moved by the bitter cry of homeless England, and of his or her own accord set an example of restitution ? If only one or two would come forward with such an offer, great things could be done, and future history would know them as the saviours of their country. Surely there are better things even in this life than holding fast by one's possessions. Indeed, if you hold them too fast they end by slipping from your grasp. There is many a landowner to bear witness to this. The land nowadays does not pay as it used to. Farms stand idle, because those that should till them, for want of true homes—a cottage, a bit of land of their own—have been swept off the soil. In the long-run no kingdom and no

empire can thrive which is not upheld by a soil-tilling people. So says history.

One is apt to be looked upon as an anarchist if one ventures to tread, however little, on the toes of the landed interest. Time was when working for the liberation of the slave was as bitterly opposed, yet we have all come to see that slavery is wrong. Sooner or later events will teach us that the slavery of the British masses is wrong also, and that for our own sakes it must not continue. Meanwhile, as regards mere expenditure, the unemployed cost the community a great deal more than if we provided for them at public expense in cottage-homes and farm-colonies. Helping a man to be his own helper is cheaper than letting him starve or beg ; for drink is costly and crime is costly. So much for political economy.

This Homelessness somehow has become the keynote of the succeeding chapters ; a lantern lighting up every nook and corner of the Social Problems ; a guiding light, too, showing what might be done.

There is a little poem by Longfellow not so well known, somehow, as it should be. There was a planter's daughter and sole heiress who, coming to see that slavery is wrong, freed every slave on her property, though it left her penniless, and went to earn her living as a school-mistress. We call such pretty stories poetry, and possibly we shed a tear—ah, but it is poetry of the true poetry of life. Without doubt Longfellow had fact for it. And what a reward was hers even in this life—a crown of influence !

“For she was rich, and gave up all
To break the iron bands
Of those who waited in her hall,
And laboured on her lands.”

"It is their prayers, which never cease, that clothe her with such grace," says Longfellow. She was queen in that valley, "subduing even rough village churls by her angelic looks." Be sure you cannot give up anything but you will have it back tenfold, even in this life. You might have to give up some of your lands, but you might be a king of the people—not in a demagogue sense ; there is a kingship which is of Christ.

And of all new-century suggestions surely none is so important, or might be more fruitful of blessed results, than to give to the toiling masses—too often the hungering, starving masses—a new right of their own to sing Britain's two proudest songs, "*God Save the King*" and "*Home, Sweet Home*"; the former with gladdened hearts of grateful loyalty, the latter in a new sense of a true home life for even "the poorest of the poor."

This book, then, is not seeking to disseminate mere levelling ideas, except indeed in so far as Canon Ede has pointed out in his Hulsean Lectures, that "one cannot level up (*i.e.*, raise the fallen masses) without in a measure levelling down." But this is only following out a long-given law, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." To wit—he that hath thousands of acres, let him consider that he holds them at the cost of countless thousands of ill-fed mouths.

But in a well-ordered land "they shall sit every man under his own vine and fig tree ; and none shall make them afraid : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

* * * * *

One recent summer, while recruiting in the Black Forest,

a letter reached me ; it came from Switzerland, but its writer was a citizen and merchant of Leipzig. A friend had called his attention to *A Colony of Mercy*. He was much interested in social endeavour, and glad to learn that the efforts of the Fatherland for the unemployed, the tramps, the ill-housed, should through that book have become known in Britain. "But," wrote he, "why have you not said anything at all of how we strive to help the poor in our cities, or, rather, how we seek to prevent their sinking to the level of the chronically destitute by means of the 'Elberfeld System?'" Well, to tell the truth, I knew little or nothing of the "Elberfeld System." Here a great work has been going on for twenty, thirty, forty years in quite a number of German cities, and my own ignorance was simply the ignorance of hundreds of men and women in this country—not of the habitually careless, but of those who are earnestly seeking for ways and means effectually to wage war on the fearful state of British slum-life. Just like that other work for the unemployed—the Farm Colonies, the Relief Stations, that network of mercy, spreading silently and helpfully over a sister country—this city work also has been going on steadily, even victoriously, yet so quietly, that we in this secluded island of Great Britain, wringing our hands over even greater social evils, have scarcely heard of it. At any rate—for I find there is a Blue Book concerning the Elberfeld System—it has not struck the popular consciousness, it has not been brought home to us as an example we might do well to follow.

Of course I replied to my unknown correspondent, and so eager was he that this British ignorance should not continue that he came to see me in the Black Forest.

"For," said he, "I am personally interested. I am as busy a man of business as well can be, but I am also an *Armen-Director** of the City of Leipzig; I have been these twenty years, ever since I helped to introduce the Elberfeld System into Leipzig. It is working well with us," he said; "we have splendid results for all our trouble, if trouble there be." And he wound up with an invitation that I should come to Leipzig and see for myself. I promised, but the spirit of laziness cropping up after he had left—one does get lazy in a summer pine-wood—I argued there was no hurry. In *A Colony of Mercy* I had tried to show English folk how Germany within ten years had practically got rid of her army of tramps and loafers; yet English folk, though they had read the book, had written about it, and had carried it into many a pulpit, duly admiring the story therein set forth, were apparently not so eager to follow the example. At least the seed sown was very slow in coming up—a green bud of promise here and there was all I had seen of a harvest.† So there was no hurry. I would wait and see what came of these buds before venturing to hold up another working model on behalf of the helplessly submerged of this great country. The Elberfeld System would not dissolve into mist, even though I waited, and I wrote to my Leipzig friend to this effect.

But, lo! within the next few weeks the Elberfeld System was thrust upon me by two other correspondents—

* Director of Poor.

† One of these budding promises has developed into "*The Christian Union for Social Service*," with their Farm and Training Colony at Lingfield, Surrey.

I *must* go and study it, they said. Now, here were three different people, neither knowing the other, each pointing the way to me, saying I must! This settled the matter; it is a guidance, I said, a finger-post to follow. And I went, first to Leipzig, where I was received with all manner of courtesy and helpfulness by my friend the *Armen-Director*. Being himself, as already stated, one of the moving springs of the system in that city, doors opened everywhere. I was admitted to Committee and Board meetings, penetrating even the inner sanctuary of the administration, officials high and low, paid and unpaid, most readily assisting my endeavours to become acquainted with the working of the system; it seemed as if they, each and all, were anxious to share the good they knew was being done in their own city with one who had come from another country equally anxious to learn. And thus after a fortnight's "hard labour" I seemed pretty well informed.

Yet, *l'appétit vient en mangeant*: "I have seen the system at work in Leipzig," I said, "now I must go to Elberfeld and see it there." Leipzig, in its several ways of providing for the city's poor, is a very faithful copy of Elberfeld; yet one naturally was anxious to study the system in the place where it had originated, and where it has been working so well, that Elberfeld, in this respect, has become the teacher of the world. And I am thankful I saw it in both places. Elberfeld threw a new light on Leipzig, and Leipzig had fitted me the better to understand Elberfeld. Though the system is the same, yet the two cities naturally differ in their ways of putting it into practice: it was instructive to note the differences and find out the reason. In the succeeding pages I shall make

one picture of what I saw in both places, and even when I speak of what I have seen more particularly at Leipzig, I shall keep to the name "Elberfeld System"; yet I shall point out differing modes, speaking of Leipzig and Elberfeld separately, as occasion will offer, and specializing their separate ways.

If one thing has struck me more than another in either of these German cities, it is that they *are* "cities"—a habitation of citizens, that is, indeed, of *fellow-citizens* and not merely a collection of householders.

I.

CITIZENSHIP.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens.”—*Gal. vi., 2.*

AMONG the signs of the time in these days none, perhaps, is more symptomatic of a great want or prophetic of a better future than the institution of “Citizen Sunday” in London. From hundreds of pulpits within these last few years, on a day set apart for the purpose, the declaration has gone forth that dwellers in cities are not self-contained units, but that each and all are the better or the worse for their neighbour’s condition. The present chapter, then, may be welcomed in corroboration. The writer, however, would have it understood that she is not ignorant of the many large-hearted endeavours in this country on behalf of the poor, both of public and private agencies; still less would she disparage these efforts as far as good intentions and, in many instances, noblest personal service are concerned; but she invites all those whose sympathies go out to the sufferings of our million-headed “neighbour” to follow her to Elberfeld city, and compare notes for themselves.



Like most national endeavours, the “Elberfeld System” was the inspiration of one man. The city of Elberfeld is talking of raising a monument to him towards the jubilee

of the system, but what monument in stone or marble can such a man require, seeing that the work itself is his monument, raised now in a score of cities. What inscription to his honour can be wanted when the improved condition of the people, yes, and the saving of vast sums of money (since national prudence must consider money) on all hands, testify to the splendid legacy this man has left behind him ?

Some fifty years ago there lived at Elberfeld, as one of her foremost citizens, a man of wealth, of wisdom, and kindness, the head of an old-established banking firm ; a man, too, in whom "the king delighted," for there are autograph letters of Frederick William IV. to his "well-beloved Daniel von der Heydt."

Elberfeld, in the Ruhr valley, in Rhenish Prussia, is a considerable manufacturing town—a sort of German Manchester. Not that the wealth of the city at first sight strikes the visitor, for along with the prosperity following upon industry there has always been a good deal of sober simplicity at Elberfeld, born of the Christian influences which for generations have swept the Ruhr valley. Elberfeld and its twin city, Barmen, bear a good reputation in the Fatherland. But that other following upon industry also was there—a growing population of working people, often with a large admixture of surplus hands, distress and penury falling like a blight upon the people every recurring season of slackness. The poor outgrew the wealthy in alarming proportions, producing a stagnating pool of starvation in the midst of the opulent city. For years both the civic authorities and the churches had striven to cope with the growing evil, for there were not only

the honest poor, crowded out of work, but the beggars who would not work, born and reared as they were in a chronic state of no-work, which year after year weighed heavily on the city's conscience. Do what they would with city relief and church charity, the evil only increased; beggars were round every doorstep, yet if you looked for a man to do an odd job for you, that man was not to be found.

Now Daniel von der Heydt, who had long sat in the City Council, turned the matter over in his business mind—in his Christian heart too, for he pitied the people. And reading his Bible one day, he came upon a verse in Exodus which ran thus: "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men . . . to be rulers over thousands, rulers over hundreds, rulers over fifties, and rulers over tens." That hour in which old Daniel von der Heydt sat reading the good counsel of Jethro to Moses was the birth hour of the Elberfeld System. For this is the working principle of the system—rulers over thousands, over hundreds, over fifties, over tens, and out of *all* the people. It is a tree with root and stem and branches; it is a centralizing and decentralizing of effort.

It means that every well-to-do citizen—that is, every man who is not himself in want—is expected to be willing to serve the city when she has need of "rulers"; and it comes to this, that every fairly well-situated man—the rich and leisured as a matter of course, but the less wealthy and much occupied none the less—takes his turn of being set over a poor man or two in the name of the city, not, of course, to rule them in a mastering or patronizing sense, but to "care" for them, helping them to tide over the evil hour, and seeing that they want not. "*Am I*

my brother's keeper?” is a question answered in the affirmative by these rulers when the hungry and ragged stand pleading for help. Yet “keeping” means many things ; it will always mean help, but not always the giving of money.

Such a ruler of the poor in the Elberfeld System is called an *Armenpfleger*, a word not easily translated, meaning just what the above lines would describe, viz., a man who has a care of the poor. We will use the simple word “Helper” in these pages—always remembering that to help the poor means many things ! And the secret of the success of the system is that there are many Helpers, an *Armenpfleger* never having on an average more than four people to look after, that is, four cases, whether of individuals or of heads of families ; in Elberfeld, as a rule, he has only two. So he can look after them, make it his business to look after them carefully, thoroughly, helpfully.

Think what this means ! It means that the city of Elberfeld, with 140,000 inhabitants, has five hundred of these Helpers ; Leipzig, with close upon 400,000 inhabitants, having over a thousand ; busy men of the city (not parish-workers, nor yet Poor Law Guardians in our sense), who meet every fortnight at the self-same hour at their respective Boards all over the city to consider the welfare of the poor people over whom they have charge. On Wednesday evening every fortnight, month after month, year after year—why, it is like a constant voyaging forth of the world of the not-starving to see that the world beneath them, nay, around them, starve not. And it is simple business, simple duty ; no sentimental or patronizing charity about it. *No one in*

our city shall starve, go ragged, or perish with cold—this is the underlying principle.

There are no poor-rates in Germany in the British sense, but by the Elberfeld System a city recognizes the duty of looking after its own people, and when the yearly budget is fixed for civic expenditure, they fix the year's poor budget as a part of it, guided by the past year's requirements, and leaving a margin for special effort in time of special need.

The city, for poor-relief, is divided into districts, each district in either city comprising not more than about a dozen *Armenpfleger*, i.e., "Helpers"; in other words, at Elberfeld not more than about two dozen of poor (individuals, or heads of families), while at Leipzig, where a Helper generally has his three, four, or even six cases, fully double that number—Elberfeld thus being divided into thirty-six districts, Leipzig into nearly eighty.

Each Helper's division of his district is called his ward. At Elberfeld the Helper's ward is locally circumscribed, his poor people being found either in the same house or, at any rate, in the same part of a street; at Leipzig they have improved upon this, the Captain endeavouring, as much as possible, to fit the Helper to the cases, and *vice versa*. The twelve or fourteen Helpers are presided over by a Captain — *Districts-Vorsteher* — let us call them Captains; and all the Captains again, at any rate at Elberfeld, form a Central Board, headed by the civic *Armen-Verwaltung*, which simply means the city's administration of the city's poor. This *Verwaltung* at Elberfeld consists of a chairman (the present chairman being in English parlance an Alderman), four City Delegates, and four ordinary citizens (two of whom, as at present constituted, happen to

be Board Captains), one of the former and one of the latter retiring every year (two of each every third year), but open to re-election.

At Leipzig the poor administration consists of a Board of "Directors of Poor," as they are termed, similarly constituted of four Town Councillors, four City Delegates, and seven ordinary citizens, the former holding office for one year, the latter for three years, open to re-election on retiring. The Helpers in both cities serve for three years, one-third of each Board retiring yearly ; that is to say, they are at liberty to retire, the majority serving again and again. At Elberfeld the membership of the Central Board is honorary, the presiding member at Leipzig, for some reason of local expediency, being a salaried* Town Councillor. In both cities there is, of course, a staff of secretaries and clerks forming the Office of the Administration ; but all the rest, be it Director, Captain, or Helper, are purely honorary—representatives of the city for helping the city's poor. And they have somehow adopted the principle that it is an honour to be nominated Poor-Helper, an honour, moreover, *not to be refused* ! They have invested the Helpership with a dignity, with a sort of citizen's pride almost, which strikes one as strangely beautiful. It means real work and no reward save the satisfaction of doing the city's duty by the poor. My friend, the *Armen-Director* of Leipzig, told me that when

* Not salaried for this work. The British Poor Law requires heavy items both for its officers and its offices, not to mention the cost of workhouses ; the Elberfeld office consisting in a couple of the plainest of rooms set apart in the City Chambers. If no one else will try for an "Elberfeld System" here, let British ratepayers do so,

first they introduced the system in that city, there were those who said, "You will never get men enough"; but, in fact, although they now require over a thousand Helpers at Leipzig, they have never had to enforce the duty of accepting. Think of it; a thousand men, busy men of all classes, freely giving their time to this work!

As one looks over the list of Helpers, one is struck with one thing—it is very comprehensive: bankers, merchants, professors, doctors, lawyers, well-to-do shopkeepers, tradesmen—all meeting at these boards in their common capacity of Helpers. As for bankers, the present head of the Elberfeld Administration is a banker. Any week-day, from eleven to twelve, or one, he is to be found in his place at the Poor Office; and not only this, but he is the guiding mind of the whole. I was present at a Board meeting of the Administration, and I was struck with his intimate knowledge of the working; not only that he seemed in personal touch with all his Captains, but he had his notes ready concerning all the cases of relief of the two Boards of Helpers, which at that meeting came up for examination—about sixty individual cases of poor people for the current fortnight. And he not only had it on paper, but he seemed to know about these poor people and their children, and their wants, and all that was to be said for or against them. This is business, I thought. Yet he also serves on the Board of Aldermen, so apparently has other city work besides; and he is not a sleeping partner, but the active head of a banking-house—a wealthy banker, they say, evidently mindful of his own business as well. What do Englishmen equally situated say to this? I was told that Elberfeld banker had a good and wise

mother, who not only taught him the rich man's duty of taking the lead on subscription lists, but the even greater duty of seeing that wealth given is well administered, actually doing the good it can do ; since it is not always the giving, it is sometimes the withholding, of money, but always the giving of self, which ensures the true result.

But I was speaking of the Helpers, and the comprehensiveness of the list—“*able men out of all the people*,” ran Jethro's counsel—in fact, the only profession conspicuous by their absence are the clergy, and this simply for the reason that the Church has her own department for looking after the poor. Men of independent means, on the other hand, are well represented. As for professors and such like, one of the Elberfeld Captains said to me, with a comical seriousness, “Academical honours, you know, do not unfit a man for the helpershhip.” But the tradesman class is also well to the fore, the only trades which are excluded on principle—besides, of course, the publican—being the baker, butcher, and grocer, because these, having their own dealings with the poor, might be supposed to play into their hands. It is quite refreshing to see how educated gentlemen and simple tradesmen sit side by side on these boards, the seniority going not by rank or position, but by experience and years of service.

At one of the Boards I visited, the Captain—and a shrewd man he was—was a simple house-painter, one of his Helpers being a doctor, another a barrister, and it seemed not incongruous. Every Captain has worked his way up. The Elberfeld President himself began as an ordinary Helper, and was, when I saw him, in his twenty-fourth year of service. Three years he was bound to serve, as

a good citizen, the remaining twenty-one are his free-will offering. There are quite a number of such at Elberfeld, and the city acknowledges it gratefully. They have a Roll of Honour—I had almost said a Legion of Honour!—on which are inscribed the names of those who have served for twenty-five years. That Roll of “Jubilee members of the City of Elberfeld Poor Administration” is hung up in the City Chambers, and counts now upwards of ninety honourable names, some of the bearers of which have “gone up higher,” to where surely even such earthly citizenship finds a “Well done!” It would appear from this that quite a number of Captains and Helpers have offered themselves again and again for re-election. How is this, if not according to that strange law that if one has a care of any, he ends by caring *for* them?

There was a touching proof of this at Leipzig. It was at one of the Helpers' Board meetings; it happened to be the day when the Captain announced the names of those who, having served their three years, were at liberty to retire, and the usual remark was added, that if they chose to volunteer for re-election they would be welcome. They offered themselves again, one of them under peculiar circumstances. He had a case on hand of a poor widow who had seen better days, her husband having been a clerk in receipt of a salary of £120, but he dying suddenly, she was left unprovided for, with several children; the widow and orphans accordingly had to be looked after by the city. As will be seen presently, the object always is to help the poor to help themselves, only they must not starve in the meantime. The point with that widow (she was a comparatively young woman) was what work she could

put her hand to, and the Helper in question had an idea that, if the city would pay the premium (some £15), she could be trained at a certain Institute for midwifery and thereafter have a ready source of income for herself and her children. The rest of the Helpers opposed this, not because the £15 in itself was unattainable—suitable cases being assisted in that way—but the woman was known to be untidy in her own home, and, said they (the Captain endorsing it), a woman who cannot see to mended clothes for her own children is not likely to prove a good nurse to anyone's new-born baby. On this ground the request was refused. But this Helper had set his heart on helping that woman. The case had come up for the second time that evening, he having been refused by his colleagues once before, and as he still persisted, the matter was now referred for ultimate judgment to the Board of Directors. But mark this: When this Helper was asked would he retire, having served his time, or would he offer himself for re-election, he said slowly and measuredly—he seemed a stolid man of the tradesman class—"I *was* going to retire, for I have served my term twice over already, and my hands are full at home; but I cannot leave that woman in this plight. I offer myself for re-election!" Needless to say that a burst of applause went round the Board. He was re-elected, and will be able to go on fighting for this thriftless mother and her fatherless children, the rest of the Board, of course, seeing that the results of his fighting—since the Elberfeld System will not fail to assist her—be well applied.

Every Helper, besides his visits to his charges, is "at home" at a certain hour twice or three times during the

week (some of these business men from seven to eight in the morning) to attend to any "case" coming to him with a tale of distress—just like a doctor "at home" for patients! And relief-seeking persons, whoever they be, know exactly where to go to claim help, either for themselves or for a neighbour, the first move having, of course, to be made by the people themselves. It does happen occasionally that the "first move" is made by a kindly neighbour when the person in distress is "too proud" to come. Besides, the Helper is thoroughly acquainted with his ward, and at the boards the knowledge of the various wards gradually gets interchanged, so that the administration really has a wonderfully minute knowledge of the whole stratum of likely distress.

There are strict rules. The city says "none of our people shall starve or perish with cold"; so they have set themselves to find out what a man, woman, and family require to keep them in absolute necessities, and this is what they have arrived at as a minimum for food, clothing, and shelter :—

	s.	d.
A man per week	3	0
His wife, living with him "	2	6
A child of 14 and over, if wage-earning .. "	3	0
A child of 14 and over, not wage-earning .. "	2	3
A child, aged 10 to 14 "	2	0
A child, aged 5 to 10 "	1	7
A child, aged 1 to 5 "	1	4
A baby in arms "	1	0
<hr/>		
In all, for a family, if consisting of the above		
eight members	16	8

Or a corresponding sum according to numbers and ages; while 3s. 6d. is the allowance for any single adult.

Much of the help given is quite temporary, cases coming up for relief being off the books again within a month possibly, which surely shows that there is no "demoralizing" about it. Yet, for a fact, people are assisted there long before we here would dream of coming to their rescue, the Elberfeld System being a *preventive* measure, aptly described as a system of bridges ever seeking to lead back the struggling to being their own helpers. It is just this assisting *in time* which marks the great moral results.

Now, 16s. 8d., or so, per week for a family of eight members, as above constituted, is not wealth, but this, in the city's estimation, they must have in order to get along ; if they have less, the Helper shall make it up to them. If, for instance, such a family's united earnings be 10s. in any given week, 6s. 8d. is granted in cash or kind *for that week*, and after due investigation.

For it is not simply a giving ; everything is most minutely inquired into. The Helper knows the history of the family in question ; it is his duty to find it out, and the whole machinery is so arranged that, apart from his personal faithfulness in the matter, nothing that ought to be known can well escape. He knows the wage-earning capacity of each member ; he knows what they have been earning, and he knows any reason why earnings have stopped. He finds out the character of the people—whether they are sober or not, industrious or not, good parents or not, whether they are in good health or not. In fact, these Helpers are something like a family doctor inquiring into everything and prescribing accordingly. Nor is it even now merely a giving, but every effort is

made to help them to find work ; to encourage them to look for it ; to recommend them to employers if possible ; to assist them to new means of work if old channels have failed. All this is done ; but in the meantime—and this is the grand principle—no man shall be left in want. If it is an urgent case, the Helper is fully empowered to give the weekly allowance at once out of his own pocket, being repaid at the next Helpers' meeting ; but as a rule he waits to report the case at his next Board meeting, having in the meantime made all due researches. The case is then put to the vote, and the just allowance, proposed by the Helper, is decided by the majority, the Captain having the casting vote. And such allowance holds good only *for one fortnight*, that is till the next Board meeting, when the case comes up again, the Helper within that fortnight having at least once visited the people, probably more than once. Any change in the family's circumstances—even such as a casual job bringing in a shilling or two—is duly noted, and the amount of allowance fixed accordingly for the next fortnight.

At this point I inquired of one of my Elberfeld informants, "How can you be sure the people always tell you quite honestly when they have any casual earnings?" "Why, there is the little book," said he, producing a small notebook, of which every person in receipt of, or applying for, relief is given a copy. It is inscribed "Wages and earnings of —," followed by the name and address of the holder. And foremost among the printed rules in front of this little book stands the request to any employer not to pay any wages whatsoever without entering the amount on its pages. Employers are even requested

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to add any information they may be able to give, such as, for instance, that the holder of the book, to their certain knowledge, is in receipt of earnings elsewhere, that other employer failing to make the entry. You see, when a city is so earnestly anxious to help where help is really needed, the authorities are fully entitled to look for the assistance of every fellow-citizen, more especially the employers of labour. And they get that assistance pretty freely, because everyone knows it is right to uphold the city's representatives in their effort to exclude the unworthy. Here also, of course, the watchfulness of self-interest comes in, employers of labour full well knowing that the administration of the poor affects the civic budget, and consequently the local taxes.

But there is even more. When any working-man who has been in regular employment suddenly presents himself as needy, the late employer is invariably referred to, and, in a civil way, is asked to oblige the Board by stating, confidentially, *why* that man's earnings have stopped; whether there is any complaint against the man, and so forth. What a check lies here, and not *only* on the working-man! Will the reader say, "But this is intolerable inspection!" Well, the honourable man never grumbles at inspection if he knows he is thereby aiding the community in a real good work. Indeed, there is so much discipline connected with this wonderful sentence, "No man in our city shall starve or go ragged," one is inclined to say that, great as the fact is that no genuine case can go unrelieved, almost greater is that other fact that non-genuine cases are gradually becoming impossible. It is a marked sign of national progress, surely, when a

whole community can be educated to see that justice is the true prop of charity, and it is indeed the *moral* result which is the most valuable gain of the Elberfeld System.

I was permitted to be present at two or three of the Helpers' fortnightly meetings, both at Leipzig and at Elberfeld, and it was astonishing to observe the minute knowledge these Helpers and their Captains have of the people under their charge. There is, of course, this to be said, that the real *clientèle* of these Boards are those who again and again come for assistance, the chronic cases, all particulars of whom have long been registered. The Captain of the Elberfeld Helper Board, at which I was present, kindly gave me all manner of information. He is a merchant. When I expressed my surprise to him at the business-like and thorough-going way in which that Board meeting was conducted, and not only business-like—these thirteen men seemed more like fathers sitting in council over a lot of troublesome children than anything else; they had a personal knowledge of each and all of their poor people, whether they were good or bad, deserving or not deserving, ill or well, apt to be fortunate or unfortunate; and that Consul-Captain seemed to know his Helpers quite as intimately as he knew their poor — “Why,” said he, when I expressed my surprise, “of course, I must know all about them, and if I am in doubt about anything I just go round and look up the case for myself. How could I be a Captain of Helpers if I did not know both them and the people?”

“I go round”; this reveals another little secret.

Both the Captain and his Board of Helpers are *resident within the district* which is under their care. This is an

advantage, and is possible in a country where the poor are not huddled together in slums by themselves—a city of wretchedness within a city of wealth. The rich and the poor do not live at opposite poles in Germany, as they do for the most part in British cities, but are interspersed, and thus a Helper *can* live within easy reach, possibly in the same street, as his poor *protégés*, or just “round the corner.” The British outcome of city life, “a great gulf fixed,” is a real difficulty in the way of any Elberfeld System here ; but one can only say, if we have allowed a great gulf to be fixed, all the greater is the duty of seeking to bridge it. These fearful British slums !

Yet there is some interspersing in this country. Take West London, for instance. Most of the great folk there, not to mention the business men of Oxford or Regent Street, could find a slum within a few minutes’ walk, sometimes only by turning a corner. According to the Elberfeld System, they would, on behalf of the Borough, be in charge of the nearest slum, taking their turn of service. They would have a personal acquaintance with all the poor people—be their friends, their teachers, their helpers ! Starvation would be banished — a London Borough would not permit it. But banished also would be much else that now makes the district a reeking sink. And these West End folk thus helping, thus watching, thus uplifting, would simply be good citizens, looking upon such citizen-duty as a matter of course, the result being guaranteed by the uniformity of effort. Why should we call such suggestions chimerical here, when they are looked upon as simple citizenship abroad ? proved and tried, and successfully working ! There would be

no pauperizing, but a gradual uplifting and saving of expense.

And as the Captain keeps a watchful eye over his Helpers, in case any prove perfunctory, so also that central administration, the Directors at Leipzig, the *Armen-Verwaltung* at Elberfeld, keep an eye on the Captains. I have already mentioned the fortnightly Board at the City Chambers where that Chairman Banker presides, the Helper Boards being held anywhere about the city, in schools or other public rooms empty in the evening. At that Central Board meeting all the Captains are present; if absolutely prevented, which seems rare where such a spirit of public duty prevails, their Senior Helper is in his place on their behalf. And at each meeting two complete Helper Boards attend to take their turn of the yearly examination, when all their cases for the time being come up, and are gone into minutely, the President, as we have seen, having his notes prepared beforehand, and knowing apparently everything about the poor people—enough, at any rate, to inquire into the fitness of the assistance granted. That Board meeting lasted for three hours. The first half of the time was required for examining the two Helper Boards, Helper after Helper standing up to answer for his people; and the thorough, business-like way in which case after case was overhauled, with a marvellous expedition into the bargain—each case, because of the President's careful working up beforehand, being disposed of by means of two or three leading questions—was simply astonishing. It was like the roll-call of an army, everything ready and everything in order; and though regular office-work, it is the kindness of these

meetings that strikes one. It was all so sober, so bent upon justice, but breathing a human sympathy that speaks well for the effects of the system. There were nearly sixty men present, and as Helper after Helper underwent examination for his charges, one had ample evidence that the poor of Elberfeld could never be "submerged," because of the firm, yet kindly, grip that has a hold of them. And the thoroughness of it, every "case" being, as it were, of public interest, as though it were the one care of the hour! The Helper Boards and Captains having retired, the Governing Council—that is, the Chairman and his eight coadjutors—sat for another hour and a-half overhauling the rest of the Poor Administration, the management of the sick, of orphans, of inmates of the poor-house, of which anon. I may just state here that the sum expended in Elberfeld during that fortnight for poor-relief all told amounted to 8,952 marks (about £445), covering 1,172 "cases."

As stated in the introductory remarks, the system, while attending to every case of want, has proved an economical system. The Elberfeld officials in one of their latest reports have worked out a table showing that during upwards of forty years since first introduced this system has saved the city over 5,000,000 marks (some £250,000), proving it thus: In the year 1853, upon a population of, roughly, 50,000, the city's expenses for poor-relief, apart from hospitals, orphanages, etc., amounted to 3s. 6d. per head of the population. The very next year, the new system having begun to work, showed a saving of 88,000 marks; while the year 1891, upon, roughly, 130,000 inhabitants, and measured by the standard of 1853,

produced a saving of 209,179 marks—forty years showing a lessening of outlay to the amount of 5,215,015 marks, against 10,224,429 marks, which would have been the sum required had the state of affairs of 1853, with its expenditure for poor-relief of 3s. 6d. per head of the population, not been superseded by a more effective management. Indeed, of recent years, the ordinary expenses of the Elberfeld poor-relief proper have sunk to a figure ranging between 1s. 4d. and 1s. 8d. per head of the population. In a report just to hand I note that the Elberfeld Administration during the past year has dealt with some 1,900 cases*, about one-third of which would be permanently on the list, *i.e.*, the old and infirm; that the year's expenditure has been 228,641 marks (about £11,400), amounting to 1s. 7½d. per head on the city's population; that the expenditure for poor patients in the city's hospitals and asylums, the care of orphans and neglected children, including imbeciles, the cost of the poor-house (concerning which see anon), amount to a further £8,000 roughly, bringing the entire civic expenditure on behalf of the poor and suffering for that year, all told, to about £19,500.

The Leipzig figures (400,000 inhabitants) stand thus:—Expenditure for 1899, £88,840; of which upwards of £40,000 went to poor-relief proper, *i.e.*, out-door relief; in all about four shillings per head of the population. During the past year the Leipzig Helpers have assisted

*This figure, as also on foregoing page, comprising the cases in which money help was given; there would be, perhaps, an equal number which were looked into and morally assisted, maybe with advice, maybe with admonishment, possibly even with discipline, and, wherever possible, with opportunity for work.

with money some 10,000 people—a submerged fortieth!—which figure surely speaks for the results of the system.

In addition to this, there is, of course, special expenditure in times of special distress. To meet heavy seasons of “out-of-work” the city undertakes contracts for road-making, even railroad making. Now, unemployed factory workers are not the best navvies ; and, as the Elberfeld secretary told me, completing one such contract recently cost the city some £2,000 more than if they had employed proper workers ; “but then we tided over our poor people in a satisfactory way, keeping them from mere relief, that is, alms !”

Let it be noted there is but one central management now for all assistance to needy persons, sound or sick, the cost of the whole being borne by the civic budget. This fact cannot be impressed too strongly upon British ratepayers and charity dispensers, this unification of a city’s duty towards distress, and springing from this common centre, a corresponding centralization of all means of relief, the most thorough-going, and even many-sided, system of helpfulness, but only one agency—the most thoroughly organized and promptly working assistance on the one hand, the most certain absence of waste, including ill spendings, on the other.

As to sick-relief, there is, first, the assistance of the poor in their own homes. Every district has its doctor nominated and paid by the Central Poor Board, and needy patients get a ticket from the Helper admitting them to the doctor, and a ticket to the chemist if prescriptions have to be made up. One would have to write reams to describe the orderly way, simple withal, in which all this is managed

to insure prompt help and to prevent abuse. It suffices for our purpose merely to hint at the many-sided completeness of poor-relief according to the Elberfeld System. Even such things as spectacles, in these cities, are given to the short-sighted or weak-eyed needy in the ordinary course of poor-relief.

But secondly, the general infirmary (*i.e.*, the great city hospital), the lying-in wards, the orphanages, the asylums—all these, as already pointed out, as far as the poor are concerned, go hand-in-hand with the central relief-management. That is how that fortnightly Board meeting of the Elberfeld Poor Administration took three hours, despite the marvellous expedition displayed. This, also, is the point where the great saving comes in—a saving which cannot so easily be demonstrated in figures; but if all manner of relief in any city is under the supervision of one central Board—a civic administration—it stands to reason there can be no overlapping, that a clear insight into the working of the whole is obtainable, and that every pound spent brings in a pound's worth of results. I need not here speak of the hospitals, asylums, and other institutions of these German cities, for these both in England and Scotland are notably well managed; the point only is that they are civic undertakings, working hand-in-hand with that fundamental principle of the system that “no person within this city shall be left in want.” It is the completeness, the all-comprehensiveness, the thoroughness, the merciful common-sense, and, above all, *the united action*, which yield the results any visitor to these cities can verify for himself.

Now, how do the figures above given compare with the

poor-rates of an English or Scotch city ? And, above all, how do results compare ?* There is but one testimony on all hands at Elberfeld, that not only have the city's finances been saved to a considerable extent—by one half against former years—but *the moral condition of the people has been improved*. It is impossible now for anyone to go hungry or insufficiently clad in Elberfeld ; the city does not permit it. But also it is impossible for any undeserving person to draw charity. Then what happens to the ill-deserving ? Do they starve ? By no means ; the rather that an education is at work by means of this system, a wholesome discipline, which in the course of forty years has succeeded in teaching once more that old adage—If a man will not work, neither shall he eat ; and since even the good-for-nothing must eat, the Elberfeld System knows how to keep him up to his share of work.

This is thoroughness, and the reward given to all thorough endeavour.

The above-named weekly standard of 16s. 8d. for a

* Comparison is proverbially odious, and to enter largely into British statistics or other particulars concerning this country's ways of assisting the poor, would take up far too much of our space. The one point this book seeks to press home is this: The Elberfeld System is a successful system both in finance and in charity, while in Britain, despite an enormous outlay, poor folk are found starving every winter, and the silent sufferings of the half-starved millions reflect no honour upon a wealthy country like Britain. Even supposing for argument's sake, starving were mostly a beggar's own fault, that poor fellow never enjoyed the kindly discipline of an Elberfeld System to teach him any better.

Here, however, are a few figures : The British poor-rate averages five shillings per head of the population, *i.e.*, the gross cost in England and Wales for 1899 was £11,286,973. But the figure for London is £3,465,132, or fifteen shillings per head ! Fully half of this will be used up in the administration of relief, including, of course, our workhouses. Now here we are wrong. We do anything for our dying paupers, if they will go into the "house," our

family of eight members surely is not wealth ; but where are the English slum-dwellers who at all times of need are certain of such an allowance ? Do the English poor-rates, though any householder knows what they cost him, provide for this ? Does English private charity, or, for the matter of that, does any public charity ? Nor is it the money spent at Elberfeld which does it, for, as we have seen, comparatively little is spent ; it is that army of Helpers, the thorough-going inquiry, the patient watching, the steady upholding of the poor people, the certain and prompt assistance, if need be, it is this which does it. And mark here the great difference between our English and this German system. The English Poor Law admits of assistance only when a man is absolutely destitute—not before. But the one great point of the Elberfeld System is to keep the poor from becoming destitute. It is indeed a preventive system ; and how much easier at all times is prevention than cure ! And not only easier, how much more effective, how much more moral, how much more charitable !

infirmaries being well-appointed hospitals. Would it not be wiser to guard the poor from ever sinking to pauperism ? If (as the succeeding pages endeavour to show) we strove to deal justly by the people, their dying beds might be smoothed by their own folk. It is a mistaken way first to permit conditions which can only end in the ruin of multitudinous lives, and then seek to make up for it by comforting their last gasps at the ratepayer's charge. In this country actually about one in seven dies at public expense, either as a criminal or as a pauper.

I have tried to get at the figures of British spendings in charity over and above the rates, but it is hopeless, simply because there is neither plan nor system. That our public and private beneficence amounts to millions, no one will doubt who knows the splendid willingness to give which is a British grace. Yet even of this but the lesser portion goes to feed the hungry, or clothe the naked. In our very charities we live by the poor, since half our societies and missions would find their occupation gone, if we bettered the conditions which make the poor !

An English coroner, as quoted by the *Daily Telegraph*, was standing by the heap of rags on which lay the corpse of a mother and her new-born babe, with the jury's verdict of "starved"; we read of these things in English newspapers every winter. "In England," said this coroner, "a man must have fallen into the gutter before we can pick him up; in Germany they try and keep him out of the gutter. It is a question whether this is not the more saving way—at any rate, it is the more humane." But there is no question about it! They are proving the saving in pounds, shillings, and pence, year after year, in every city where the Elberfeld System is at work; and poverty-stricken mothers with their new-born babes are not found starved in such a city! And what of the thousands in our slums who do not starve except by slow starvation—by years of suffering—where no coroner calls attention to the case, but where year after year the cry goes up to Heaven, calling forth the response of Eternal Justice—Heaven's "weighed and found wanting"—against the wealthiest country in Europe! We pay our poor-rates; and large sums, we know, pass through the hands of all manner of charitable agencies, yet slow starvation every winter is the order of the day in the slums.

"The people are so demoralized." Well, yes, they are. Do not some of us get demoralized when things go wrong year after year, and fighting against them avails not? The fact is, both heart and morals have been starved out of these people by years of a silent oppression that ought to sit heavily on the conscience of the nation.

The weekly allowance in Elberfeld is not by any means always made up in cash, the plan of the system not

being a mere random giving of money. Tickets are given for the several soup kitchens, especially where there are young children, to make sure, at any rate, that the little mouths get fed. Clothes are given, coals are given, arrears of rent are seen to, and the people judiciously assisted to meet them. The clothing department at Leipzig is ingenious, the garments—underlinen, etc.—being made at the sewing-classes of what we here should call the board-schools; the Poor Administration thus only need find the material, the pupil seamstresses serving their apprenticeship over this work. At Leipzig also they have a special bread-bakery, producing a sound, wholesome bread, for which the poor people get tickets, the bread being charged against the weekly allowance (*i.e.*, its value is deducted from what otherwise would be given in money) at rather under the ordinary price of bread at the baker's.

A basin of good nourishing soup at Elberfeld is charged to the people at 7 pfennige—about three farthings. Coals are given according to need, and *not* charged against the weekly allowance. When there is a hard frost, a person receiving relief may get as much as two hundred-weight per week for several weeks running; but when milder weather sets in the two hundredweight may not come oftener than once a month. They have a special fund in Elberfeld for this coal supply, provided for in part by the gifts of the wealthy, who prefer making the city their almoner to doing chance charity on their own account. Poor folk, where an Elberfeld System rules, are not left in fireless rooms, as has been the case in many a fearful winter in every one of our British cities, though we have no end of charitable coal-clubs. It is the

completeness of such a system only that can overtake a great need.

Now for the red-tape of all this helpfulness ; for there is a good deal of red-tape, though surely not to be objected to when it serves to hold together such thoroughness. There is, however, yet one characteristic to point out before peeping into the pigeon-holes of the office, and this is the power of decision vested in the Helpers. These Helpers are honorary servants of the city—men whom the city by the very call to the helpership pronounces worthy of trust ; and they have a beautiful custom at Elberfeld that the newly-appointed Helpers are received in public meeting by the Mayor's "*Handschlag*" (grasp of the hand), and pledged to the work with almost as much dignity as a man elsewhere is knighted. It gives them the position of trusted representatives of the city. It is the Helper, then, who proposes the amount of help, or rather the kind of help, that shall best serve his charges ; he has been at the trouble of sifting the case, making it his own—who so fit as he to say what shall be done ? Of course, he has the general rules to go by, and, as amply shown, the several Helpers of a district at their common Board are a sort of check upon each other. But long practice and the habit of comparing notes has made the work very even, and there is a sort of competition at work, a natural emulation, which makes a man anxious to be found on a par with his colleagues, equally judicious as regards his duty by the city, equally careful of his poor people, for that pride comes in which is born of the habitual discharge of a trust.

Some wiseacres at a conference of several cities, lately held at Cologne, proposed that some special body of inspectors be appointed for acting as overseers of the Helpers, a sort of outside conscience apart from their own Captains. But Elberfeld flatly refused. "It would ruin our whole work," they said, and said rightly, "for its success is guaranteed only by the complete trust we place in our Helpers; we should never get the quality of men we now secure if the position were anything lower than that of completest confidence. That trust is the check, and we find it works well."

Now, the Helper's business is solely to help; it is not his business to inquire where the money comes from, nor yet the business of his Captain; nor is it the business of either to make sure that any person in need is really chargeable to the city. The Helper simply helps to the best of his knowledge and judgment, approved by his Captain, who hands him the wherewithal at each fortnightly meeting, being himself supplied at the fortnightly Central Board; and for the rest the case is handed in to the red-tape department, *i.e.*, the *Armen-Amt*, the Poor-office at the City Chambers.

The first question with the Poor-office is to find out whether any person seeking to be relieved, and who is relieved if found in need, is chargeable to the city at all. They have a very complicated arrangement in Germany, known as the "Regulation concerning the *Unterstützungs-Wohnsitz*," which untranslatable phrase simply means that a man's claim to public assistance is decided by his "right of home" in any place. That right of home, up to a man's eighteenth year, is in the place of his birth; after that, in

any place where he has continuously resided for two years, German cities consequently exercising a rather sharp look-out on all tramps and suspicious new-comers, not so easily permitting them to settle within their borders for the legal term, lest they become chargeable to their charity. When any applicants, on being found in want, cannot make good their claim to the city's help, then the next question is : Do they belong to any other city ? If so, the assistance granted—present distress being in any case relieved—is charged to that other city which owes it ; and that other city, or town, or village union must either refund the outlay, or expect to have the starving individuals remitted to it bodily. If no right of home can be discovered anywhere, then the objects of relief are termed *landarm* (county paupers), and the Province is responsible. It is altogether a complicated arrangement, but it has led to a good deal of hand-in-hand endeavour, and certainly to thoroughness, the above-named regulation having even given the first impulse to the Farm Colony and Relief-station system spoken of at length in *A Colony of Mercy*, and providing so successfully for those “homeless ones”—the tramps, the vagabonds, and all the peregrinating labour seekers in general. It is with the city's own settled poor—that is, with her own working population in momentary distress, or incapacitated by illness or old age—that the Elberfeld System really deals.

The next point with the poor-office is to find out whether there are any relatives whose duty it might be to come to the rescue before the city ought to step in. And this department is carefully worked ; they find out children who ought to pay something towards the support of their

parents, and certain other relationships, ascending or descending, where the claim of family-tie holds good, there being distinct regulations about this, both about the degree of relationship and concerning the amount to be contributed, the latter, of course, always subject to a sufficiency of income. The Elberfeld secretary told me that they thus recover about £1,000 a year from undutiful relations, even if these are dispersed over the empire. A thousand a year, perhaps, is not much, considering the amount of trouble involved—the many strings of red-tape that have to be set in motion by police inquiry and otherwise—and not only of trouble, but of official expenditure; but it means order and discipline, it means education, it means morality, and as such has a distinct value.

For example: There may be a family, husband and wife and three children under ten, who leave an aged grandmother out in the cold. If that family's earnings do not exceed seventeen shillings a week, the city admits the excuse that they have enough to do for themselves; but if they earn more, they are liable to be called upon, on the old lady's behalf, for one penny in the shilling for the first four shillings above the seventeen shillings; for three halfpence for each of the succeeding five shillings; and for twopence-halfpenny in the shilling beyond this and up to thirty shillings of weekly earnings, the scale increasing after this fashion with any further weekly five shillings.* Thus, if they earn twenty shillings a week, the city requires a weekly threepence from them towards their

* This is approximately rendered—that is, the actual result is given, the figures only slightly changed, translating German coinage into English value.

aged relative's allowance ; if they earn twenty-six shillings they are called upon for elevenpence-halfpenny per week, while out of an income of thirty shillings a weekly tax of one shilling and ninepence-halfpenny on her behalf is not thought an injustice. It is not the amount, then ; it is the education in dutifulness which is the true value. And, of course, no liability is made good, except in a case of absolute need.

The Helper, on first taking up any case for relief, fills up what at Elberfeld they call an inquiry sheet, which sheet has to be kept up to date by his entering any changes every fortnight. This sheet is sent in to the office, where all particulars are duly noted and deposited in the official pigeon-holes, the sheet being returned to the Helper, who carries his several sheets in a neat little portfolio in his coat pocket, always at hand. At Leipzig they have a more solid arrangement, in the shape of a book of personal data, which is at once more elaborate and less transitory, and which can be referred to for years back, furnishing quite a small family history. It comes to this—that in both cities, by means of the official pigeon-holes, where everything is entered in alphabetical order (as was shown me with not a little pride by the methodical secretaries), the poor people are as well known, and their individual lives are lying as open to the eye of the system, as though it were a detective department. And so it is in a sense—detecting true want, detecting remissness in industry, and detecting absence of claim. And why not ? If you really want to benefit the people, including any moral benefit, you must first of all know all about them.

Now, such minute knowledge is arrived at not only by

the carefulness of the individual Helpers, but through the fact that the police works hand in hand with the Poor-office, the information collected in either office being freely intercommunicated. Thus, if help is granted, it is, at any rate, not granted without fully knowing the recipient. This is the educative side of the system, and surely not to be underrated. Think of the effect this must have on a population where, in order that no man shall be left starving, this has been going on for forty years ! Why, the present generation has grown up in order instead of disorder, in discipline instead of license ; yet, if by means of pressure, it is the pressure of kindly suasion rather than of coercion.

The Helper has a real mission in this respect ; he is the dispenser of outward help, but by the very pledge which binds him over to do well by the city, he is bound to look into the moral condition of a family. If he finds there is drink and other misconduct, he has to make every effort to stop it ; and how much prevention is possible here, seeing that habits of drink can be detected at the outset ! Sometimes his influence is sufficient to nip in the bud any evil thus spreading in a family ; but if he cannot prevail, say with a drunken husband, the Poor-office has the power to send a man to the house of correction for six weeks, if positively known to neglect his family, through drinking or otherwise. They have more hold over people in Germany than we have here. If there is untidiness on the woman's part, absence of home-diligence and thrift, want of cleanliness and disregard to plain hygienic rules, such Helper's effort is ever to pull up the people a peg higher. This sort of district-visiting, surely, must do good. It

is education ! And the people know it is not merely a private person looking in, not even a city missionary, or the vicar himself ; they know it is the city, which has no time to listen to any religious palaver (*how* the poor impose on our charity workers !), they know it is authority, and that, while all due helpfulness is readily granted, the police is never far from the Helper's elbow, if wanted. It is discipline with the kind face of a friend.

Another point is that the help given is not looked upon as alms at all, but as a thing the honest poor have a right to expect at the hands of their city without being called paupers, and which help is given even to the less deserving in the hope of keeping them out of the mud. For this is better than letting them sink to the public-house and to crime. At Leipzig all assistance is looked upon distinctly as a *loan*, so much so that in cases where a person who has been in receipt of relief regains the level of comparatively affluent circumstances, the city is fully entitled to recover the sums given. The red-tape in such instance is very useful, for they can not only verify to the penny what any person may have drawn, no matter how long ago, but all the history of such a recipient. I was told of a case illustrating this, where a man who had had assistance running over a number of years suddenly came into a little money, some £500 or so being left him by a distant relative, and out of that £500 he paid back, or was made to pay back, the amount received. This is, perhaps, a little hard, but it is also education.

There is one real hardship—at least, the people consider it such ; any man on becoming an object of relief loses his vote ; he is “ politically dead,” as they say, and so keenly is

this resented by some of the working people that they will suffer any hardship before letting it be known they are in want. There are those of the authorities, even, who do not like this proviso, but others say a man must pay something for his inability to provide for himself; and if it be his misfortune rather than his fault, he must yet take the consequences.

But that peculiar hardship of the English Poor Law, the workhouse, has no place in the Elberfeld System. They have poor-houses in both cities for the aged and others quite past the possibility of keeping a home for themselves; cripples in health, or cripples in intellect, and such-like. I was struck especially with the Elberfeld poor-house; it has about 240 inmates, yet by no means drones only. In the first place, that poor-house is one of the four soup-kitchens of the city; it also provides the garments, sheets, and other bedding dispensed by the Helpers, these giving out tickets, and every Friday the recipient of such a ticket is supplied at the hands of the master of the poor-house with one or other of these articles manufactured in the house. So, after all, the Elberfeld poor-house is a *work-house* to some purpose. It also provides the coffins (made by the male inmates) for many a poor burial. And, lastly, it is a sort of furniture depository. If any person who for any length of time has been in receipt of poor-relief dies in arrears of rent, that person's belongings—bed, chair, table, etc.—pass into the possession of the Poor Administration, which settles the arrears, thus accumulating a little stock-in-trade, these bits of furniture being lent out to other needy folk by the master of the poor-house—“lent,” so that they may not be distrained by landlords

This is just an example how, in such a thorough-going system, everything works hand-in-hand. I noticed, too, that according to the Elberfeld System a poor seamstress—maybe a widow—is occasionally helped to a sewing-machine, which remains the city's property ; or some other kind of machine for this or that kind of work, which can be done at home, is provided in suitable cases. The Elberfeld System is not by any means cut and dried, and in any given instance almost any sort of assistance might be provided that might best help the people to be their own helpers. One cannot speak too strongly of the grand common-sense of the whole—the stitch in time, this keynote of the scheme—which gradually does away with all the helpless poverty we are used to in British cities. In short, it thoroughly assists, but it tends to cure pauperism.

There is yet another, and quite a distinct, department of assistance at Elberfeld, managed by the ladies of the place, of which I will speak in another chapter.

At Leipzig I came across a kind of “poor-relief,” the object of which is to assist people of the class *above* the working population—people who would rather die than receive city alms in the ordinary sense. How many there are of such, struggling in deep waters—folk of gentle birth ! Now, the Leipzig Poor Authorities are fairly well off for legacies, and they use these funds in a beautiful way, partly for assisting their regular poor in special cases—such as paying arrears of rent (this also, indeed, being done at Elberfeld, after due investigation, in cases of illness and other unusual trouble), when two or three pounds sometimes are granted, in addition to what the recipient

may be drawing in weekly relief. But another part of these moneys is set aside to help that class which is above "alms," and by whom such sore straits sometimes are experienced. The Town Councillor Hentschel, who is the official head of the Poor-Relief Department of the city of Leipzig, told me, "We have assisted people by special grants to the amount of £50, if need be, and it is not known to anyone, nor will be, out of this office."

I have spoken of the moral value of the Elberfeld System; how, by its discipline, its leadings in a right direction, it elevates the whole class of the poor. There is yet another side to this — *it elevates the whole class of Helpers!* As that Consul-Captain at Elberfeld said to me, "One learns to look upon poor people with quite a different eye. We know what it is to have illness and death in a family, not to speak of other crosses and losses; but in getting to know the poor in this systematic way, one finds they suffer these things just as we do; but they suffer over and above in ways we cannot understand, except by constant personal contact. Then one not only learns to love the poor one works for, but even to respect them; theirs often is the more heroic life." It must indeed be so, for there is a law of the Kingdom of God, that we cannot do good to anyone around us but that good will flow back to ourselves with compound interest. And thus that class of a community which is capable of yielding these hundreds of Helpers is, to say the least, an equal gainer with the class that is being helped.

How such a system must tend to bridge over that fearful social gulf between the rich and poor, which the enemy of men is ever seeking to keep gaping!

This, then, is the Elberfeld System. It is not said that the social wrongs in Germany are thereby redressed—that will need far stronger remedies—but the Elberfeld System is the healing hand laid on a great wound. And I have endeavoured to set forth here its *idea* rather than enter into all the ins and outs of its machinery, for it is the idea only which could find a soil in this country and fructify and grow. There might be many objections to adopting the Elberfeld System in England or Scotland, but why not adapt it, as it has been adapted, if not adopted, in many a German city ? For not only Leipzig, but Berlin, Hamburg, Dresden, Cologne, and a score of other cities have followed the good lesson taught by Elberfeld—adapting, if not adopting, the System. Or, if we do not like the idea of copying in any degree, why not find a system of our own ?—a London, a Liverpool, an Edinburgh or Glasgow system, fitted to our own needs, our circumstances, and traditions, only that it be equally thorough, equally faithful.

I was told at the Elberfeld office that some twenty-five years ago a Liverpool deputation appeared at Elberfeld, studying the system as diligently as I had done, and that these gentlemen went away with high hopes of introducing it in their own town, but that after some months they wrote in disappointment, “It was useless even to think of it. English folk would give money, but to think of five hundred or a thousand *men* of busy Liverpool giving their time, giving themselves, like these Elberfeld and Leipzig Helpers—it was not to be thought of ! The men were not to be found.” Surely a sad testimony. But more Christian public spirit exists now in Britain than was the case twenty-five years ago. The civic conscience now

everywhere is awakened. And Englishmen, before now, have been known to enrol themselves as special constables in time of special national danger. It has become quite a hackneyed phrase to say we are living on the verge of a volcano; yet we are! The social forces are upheaving; the great outburst sooner or later is bound to come, unless we can meet it by yet stronger moral and spiritual forces. Let Englishmen, anxious to save their country, once more come forward as special constables—constables of helpfulness, of brotherly kindness, of justice to the people. Let them think it is special service—aye, very special; let them be willing to serve their country until what time this British slum-life, which day and night is crying shame upon the country, be a thing of the past, thus proving themselves citizens truly. Yet one is well aware of the thought that will rise in readers' minds: the Elberfeld System runs counter to some of the most cherished tenets of the freeborn Briton! The answer is—though British liberty is great, British honour is greater.

Nor would the Elberfeld System alone ever sweep out our slums, yet it might lead the way to such sweeping. More thoroughgoing work is wanted, and good citizens cannot so easily be let off.

Will readers say, "Let us have female constables; let our women do it?" I believe in woman's work, in her mission of helpfulness; but not for an Elberfeld System. Let me show woman's part in a succeeding chapter. But that army of Helpers, let them be drawn from the ranks of Englishmen—of British *men*—not only to ensure the true business ways, the firm grasp—some women are fit for business, some women have a grasp as strong as any man's

—but simply that such a serious matter as the saving of the people—aye, and the saving of the long-stifled national conscience, should not be delegated to even the best of women. Besides, the poor themselves need to be educated to a new state of things. They would never recognize anything new—even a great public effort—in lady-helpers. They would see in them simply the present district-visitor. And we need to turn over a new leaf. The present writer cannot be desirous of disparaging woman, but it seems plain that for the effective working of such a city-scheme more capacity is required than is usual among ladies who happen to have nothing else to do. It needs hard-headed business men, soundly-trained professionals. Moreover, what so strikes one for its fine quality in the work described is just the fact that busy men can spare time from their counting-houses, their offices, their class-rooms, or, maybe, their comfortable ease, to climb the stairs of poverty. Women are supposed to have both time and devotion, but with these men it is an offering, and this in itself is a guarantee of success.

Let British manhood arise to fill this breach. There is more at the bottom of the social question of this country than would appear on the surface; it will take the strongest of the strong, and the truest of the true, really to grapple with it, mayhap to solve it.

One thing I have learned at Elberfeld and Leipzig—how a man can be his brother's keeper.

II.

HOW THE CITY OF LEIPZIG "KEEPS" ITS BABY BROTHER; AND WOMAN'S WORK AT ELBERFELD.

"Can a woman forget? . . ." *Isa. xlix., 15.*

THE first morning I called at the Leipzig City Chambers said the Stadtrath* Hentschel: "This is Friday; you had better come here this afternoon and see the babies." "Babies! what babies?" "The *Zieh-Kinder*," said he. I went, and opening the folding-doors of the Council Room, there was a sight! The solemn green-baize table of the magistrates strewn with some scores of sprawling offspring of humanity, some in their clothes, some out of them, waiting to be weighed. On the balance at one end of the table sat a wee king in his little nakedness, rosy and plump, fists in mouth, and howling as only a ten-month baby can howl. He was old enough to turn his head at the opening door and give a look in the midst of his noisy remonstrance. One longed for a paint brush, for a camera, to fix him for ever. It was a picture.

What is a *Zieh-Kind*? The first syllable of this word is the root of *erziehen*—to bring up, to rear, to educate. It is a local expression, coined for a special purpose. There

* "Town Councillor" and official head of the Poor Board.

are babies put out to nurse, helpless witnesses to the sin of their parents, the poor little illegitimate things who have no right to be here at all. But here they are, and should *they* suffer for the hapless girl losing her crown, for the wretched man careless of womanhood ? Dr. Taube came up ; the Town Councillor evidently had announced a visitor. " You see," he said, " one has to distinguish between these poor little things and the sin that brings them. They shall have a fair chance, at any rate. Come," he added, " and watch us ; I am busy."

Leipzig is the only city anywhere on earth which has advanced to this level of humanity, and it is greatly due to Dr. Taube—at least, the present complete development is, for the beginnings of this work go back as far as 1824. The City of Leipzig, in the person of Town Councillor Hentschel, is guardian to every illegitimate child born in that city. One has heard of heirs to great wealth being made wards in Chancery, but here is a city making the poorest of the poor, even the illegitimate offspring, wards of her civic responsibility. This is of the things, surely, which will be acknowledged in Heaven one day.

The meaning of this Friday weighing-business is this : The mothers of these babes—servant girls, factory girls, barmaids—do as such girls would do here ; they put out the children to nurse. Here the city steps in. If a child is given to its own grandmother, that suffices ; but if it is placed with any stranger whatsoever, that woman is bound the very next Friday to produce the child in that Council Room, weather permitting, or at any rate to present herself, that it may be entered in the list of *Zieh-Kinder* (shall we call them foster-babes ?) and be henceforth under the care

of Dr. Taube. His yearly list comprises some two thousand children, the number at any given moment—for it is a variable quantity—averaging eleven hundred.* Now, how are these children looked after?

Leipzig, on behalf of these babies, is divided into eight districts, and Dr. Taube has a staff of eight ladies, one in charge of each district. These ladies are nominated by the town and in receipt of a small honorarium—£25 per annum—besides tramway tickets. They are, by preference, the widows, or sisters, or daughters of medical men, for they require a little knowledge of the proper rearing of children, a little knowledge of children's ailments, too, of suitable food, and so on. Each of these ladies has some one hundred and thirty children under her charge. She is bound to visit them at least once a month. If there is any trouble, or any suspicion of want of proper care, she may look in upon the children once a week, or oftener, for she is answerable for their well-being. Any newly-registered child is invariably visited by Dr. Taube himself within a week, for him to note the landmarks and bearings of the little skiff setting out on life's perilous voyage, piloted by a stranger hand. If he find taint of malady on a child, the innocent baby suffering for a parent's evil life, it is at once ordered into hospital. But, as a rule, these children start with a fair physique, "and their health is all their wealth; the community is bound to seek to preserve it for them."

One of the ladies was good enough to take me a round of visits to some of her little charges. It was on a

* Leipzig, because of its University, having large lying-in wards.

Saturday morning, when the foster-mothers do not expect to be called upon ; but of the sixteen babies examined that morning there was not one that was not lying in its little cot, clean, having had its bath, and properly wrapped in whatever swaddling clothes or other little garments the nursling's age required ; or, if an older child, not one that did not appear bathed, brushed, and neatly dressed. The lady looked about the room to see that everything was healthy ; she examined the feeding-bottle, that it was clean ; she asked to see the milk, that it was scalded and sweet, these nurse-mothers being required by regulation to take in a certain quantity of milk every morning for the infant ; it must be kept in a separate vessel, well covered up, and be carefully scalded, not boiled anyhow, by ten in the forenoon. In every one of these sixteen cases the milk was duly ready for inspection, though the lady's visit was not that morning looked for. In one case only the stopper of a feeding-bottle was pronounced not to be quite sweet, and the woman admonished to keep it in fresh water always ; and in one other case the child's body was not as nice as it should be ; the freer use of powder was urged, and of bran-baths in another instance where the child's skin showed some roughness. The lady carried a book in which the result of each visit was duly entered, a sort of testimony to the conduct of the foster-mother ; and if anything is amiss with any child—any ailment beyond the lady's own judgment, any sign of unhealthy condition—the woman is told to bring up the child the following Friday. In case of actual illness, not beyond the foster-mother's nursing, the doctor of the respective poor district would be instructed to attend.

How on earth are these women prevailed upon to fall in with this sort of supervision? What do they get for the care required of them? Does the city pay them? By no means, since it would be putting a premium upon vice if the city paid one farthing towards the child's keep. The mother, putting out the child, arranges what she can, or will, give, and surely in most cases the foster-mother's pay is poor enough, four shillings a week being the average sum; eighteenpence of this goes for milk alone, and yet they are expected to care for their little nurslings as though they were paid for their trouble like an English nurse. How are they made to do it? They mostly are women of the poorest of the poor, to whom even a couple of shillings a week, being ready money, is a welcome addition to the week's living. They take a child of their own freewill, maybe because of their need. The city cannot possibly add any remuneration—for the sake of the ill-conditioned parents it cannot; all it can do is to see that a child thus flung upon the world suffers not, wants not. And it struck me that the city of Leipzig, in the person of Dr. Taube perhaps, knows something of the heart of womanhood—knows that motherhood is inbred in woman, and that it only needs being called out—that these women only need to be taught, to be looked after, to be encouraged, in order to make first-rate mothers. "They really get to love their nurslings," said the doctor, "and, knowing how we look after them, they rise to the level of the requirement; they begin to take a pride in the condition of a child. We have been at it for ten years now; we get to know the women. Some have had children after children, and if one is found to do badly, we stop her having any

nursling at all." And he told me how he knew that even these women's husbands in some cases, rough working-men, softened to the nurslings. Surely a little child can be made a teacher, and the sole wisdom of the city of Leipzig consists in this, that they recognized the wealth of fostering love that can be called out, and have set themselves to call it out, to educate it, to bring it up to the mark on behalf of these often so grievously neglected infants.

These children really are better cared for in one respect than many a child of the well-to-do classes, seeing that from the first day of their ill-happed little lives, till they have completed their sixth year, they are under constant medical supervision. They shall not die if the city can prevent it—indeed, there is as low a percentage of infant mortality among these nurslings as will be found anywhere. The foster-mother is given all due assistance. For instance, I noticed little parcels of chemical food and other strengthening things on that green-baize table, these being given free of charge, of course. The doctor has a small private fund also for supplementing milk in special cases. Surgical bandages are given, and if there is anything seriously amiss, an order for the children's hospital can always be obtained. No, these babes shall not die for want of care, if the city can help it !

The reason why this supervision ceases when a child has completed its sixth year is simply this : at that age the child is bound to go to school, and this in Germany means more than yet has been attained here even in these school-board days. The child then enters upon the second stage of its life, having fairly conquered the dangers of unprotected babyhood. Now the school authorities take up its cause,

and it is they who would institute inquiry if a little scholar looked ill-fed, went ragged, or bore other marks of neglect.

The Leipzig rules to foster-mothers are worth studying. Not only is the quantity and quality of milk regulated, but a child's proper food at every stage is given according to rule. In those cases of sudden ailment, for instance, known in every nursery, the women are taught to replace the milk by a kind of simple veal-broth, returning to the milk when the infant again can retain it. This just as an example. (In British slums, cheese, given in ignorance, may be seen as baby food, not to mention gin, given by vice). And these babies are not allowed to be put to sleep anyhow, with chances of being overlain at night. (Only the other day I noticed in one week eleven baby deaths in London, marked "overlain"—probably by their own mothers). A wicker-cot, warm, wholesome, and clean, and however primitive, yet not without a bit of indiarubber sheeting, is required by regulation for the nursling, and a proper little bed *to itself* after the age of twelve months. And wonderful to add, a nurse-mother at Leipzig in these "microbe" days is not left without a clause teaching her that a baby should never be kissed on the mouth. Can charity hygiene go further? But even the naughty little baby is cared for by regulation, and when a child reaches the age of advisable chastisings, boxes on the ear and slaps on the head are forbidden. Do the women obey these and such-like injunctions? They know, at any rate, that the well-being of their little charges is jealously watched, and that a child's state of health will either accuse or commend them.

Once a year there is a prize-giving day, when all these foster-mothers with their nurslings must attend. Here,

again, the authorities are simply availing themselves of a natural feeling. Of course, the women like to gain a prize, or, at least, a public commendation, and strive to produce the child in the best possible condition. Some sixty prizes were given last year. This also is the day when many a childless couple of the better class is apt to put in an appearance, drawn thither by one of those mysterious cords which twine round human destinies, some of these babes having the winsome look which fastens on some childless heart and cannot be shaken off again, and the little child is adopted into a real home. Quite a number are thus provided for, the pleadings of baby-looks being strong. The one painful thing about this adopting is that the mother of the child, who, of course, can agree or refuse, if she agrees, must give up the child for good. She is not even told who adopts her baby. She may always hear of its well-being from Town Councillor Hentschel, but there her influence ceases. It seems hard on a mother—even on such a mother ; for the heart of motherhood beats even in such a girl, and may cry out bitterly in after years. On the other hand, one can understand that those who adopt the child into their own home life, while willing to take the child, cannot possibly take the child's belongings. "It is here the poor mother has to pay for her sin," said Dr. Taube. The authorities, however, are pledged to keep an eye on such children till they are of age, the adoptive parents reporting once a year to the Town Councillor, and if anything ever is suspected to be amiss he has the right to interfere. He showed me the photographs of some of these adopted children. "Don't they look nice ?" he said ; adding, "of course, it is always the pretty ones who are adopted" ; and

certainly they did look nice. Some are in quite good families. It is only the childless who are permitted legally to adopt, and perhaps this ensures good keeping, inasmuch as these people will have been hungering for a child before they adopted one.

Dr. Taube knew I had come to Leipzig to study the Elberfeld System. "Begin with the babies," he said, pointing to that green-baize table of young mortality; "this is the surest way to begin; it is putting in the thin end of the wedge. No one can refuse a baby. Rouse the hearts of British women, of British *mothers*, to this need among the British poor, and all the rest will follow." "I will try," I said; for visions rose of babies I had seen both in English and in Scotch slums, babies who even had their own mothers to look after them; yet what babies! And as for babes like these, what becomes of such in this country? There must be hundreds and thousands in our midst. Who looks after them? Who says they shall not die? Of course, they must be put out to nurse. What do we know about it, unless a case of baby-farming comes up to shock our sleepy sensibilities?

Strange to say (not to touch upon that sickening horror, the "Reading Child Murders," of some years ago), just as I have written this sentence, glancing at the morning's paper, I come upon a case of baby-farming. Here is a woman—a trained midwife—who makes her chief living by taking in poor servant girls in their time of trouble at fourteen or sixteen shillings a week, and recommending to them nursewomen, charging half a guinea for the "introduction." The case was that of a baby taken from its mother when only two hours' old, carried through the street on a bitter

cold and foggy night, dying, of course, from the exposure. The coroner called witnesses to prove that this woman had thus "introduced" to an early death some ten babies during the last year, the jury expressing their "strong condemnation," but "there was not evidence enough to return a verdict of manslaughter!"

One hears of such cases constantly ; one gives a groan as one reads the like in one's morning paper, and it is passed by. These things *do* go on all around us, despite Baby-Farming Acts, despite societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, despite the private efforts of the many noble lives spent in helping the poor. But the fact is, no private helpfulness, no Baby-Farming Act in itself, no society, can adequately cope with the evil. A city can, a whole community can, by saying, "We are these children's guardians," and bestirring itself according to such guardianship. Indeed, there would appear to be some stirring in London in this direction, the London County Council, among its many efforts of late years, having attacked baby-farmers under the Infant Life Protection Act. But, alas ! its whole staff for this purpose can be counted on one's fingers. What is that for London, where thousands of such infants will escape notice ! Yet, could not this effort expand into the right thing—as a matter of citizenship ? God only knows how many innocents are slaughtered every year. Ought we not to inquire, ought we not to say, "Heaven help us, this iniquity shall cease ?" And not only the actual "farming" to death, but the mere neglect for want of a home. Truly these babes are of the *homeless* ones ! How many a young life is lost every year by simple negligence, not of a criminal sort, yet killing the child !

These children have as truly a right to live as any child born in honourable wedlock, a right, therefore, to protection. It is not *their* fault; they were never asked, poor little things! and often they are healthy and well-formed children, who might lead useful lives if we gave them the barest chance of an environment. Why, then, do we not? We look after stray dogs, indeed of late very kindly after unfriended cats, but the wail of these thousands of babies goes to heaven year after year unavenged.*

And there is another point; not only could many a young life be saved, *but the morality of the country could be raised!* Though it is the mother who has to bear the burden of such a child, yet that Town Councillor at Leipzig, and his assistants, have a pretty keen look-out after the fathers, and in many cases can bring them to book, even getting them to pay towards the child's maintenance, acknowledging the responsibility. This is an advance in national education. Surely it must have an influence on the progenitors of these little lives to know that the community is seeking to get at their names, and successfully. In Leipzig *ninety out of a hundred fathers are known and registered*, and every effort is made to make them pay at least two shillings a week for the nurse-baby, and once having a hold on them, it often means their paying a sufficiency for the child's maintenance till its fourteenth year. Many a reckless man, by the simple knowledge that he cannot have self-indulgence without being registered for it, would perhaps be deterred where otherwise he might

* Upon inquiry I find the illegitimate births in the United Kingdom amount to some fifty thousand annually. Who *does* look after these babies?

thoughtlessly ruin a poor girl. Is not this a "saving of life," at least equal to the baby-saving? Surely some educative influence must be at work when a city openly declares its guardianship to every illegitimate child!

The day is past when one need apologize for striving to hold up to a nation a higher standard of morality; the moral conscience everywhere is quickened; it only needs being shown a way, a possible way, and there are many who will gladly join hands. Let us seek, then, to save the babies, putting in this "thin end of the wedge" towards the solving of the social question, and much else that is wrong may come up for a righting along this road.

I have said above that the Leipzig Doctor urged me "to rouse the hearts of British women, of British mothers"; but Britain herself needs rousing! Does she not owe atonement for a long, long record of crime against childhood? Apart from baby-farming, it will never be known how many thousands of poor little boys and girls have been murdered in this fair realm of England—slowly murdered, even in this nineteenth century, even in this glorious record reign—before Lord Shaftesbury, and after him George Smith of Coalville, brought about the Acts of Parliament for saving the little ones from being done to death in coal mines, in factories, on brick-fields, work-owners procuring children by batches from the very Guardians. And those that survived these tender mercies, what shall be said of the preparation for the claims of life that was theirs! Is it a wonder that the poor as we now know them have so little backbone physical and moral, when only a generation or two ago such was the people's

up-bringing? Child labour in this country (and it has worked its havoc through generations) was a slavery as great as any that rouses our national indignation when Britain herself is not the sinner. The things Lord Shaftesbury brought to light, the things George Smith strove against, within living memory, *could* never have happened among our nearer civilized neighbours—at any rate not in Germany, for the simple reason that childhood in that country these centuries past, certainly since the days of the Reformation, has required all its time, and up to its fourteenth year, for a plain, if wholesome, education. True, we have board schools now in this country; in our sudden consciousness of an ill-taught people we even offer trigonometry to the children of the poor, without therefore doing away with child labour, or arriving at an adequate protection of child life. We ingeniously contrive to have “half-timers.” In some Inspector’s Report I read only the other day of a poor little girl-child waked up at five every morning, trudging off to her five or six hours’ factory work, and expected in the afternoon to bring her mind to school, there to plod away at “passing her standard.” Think of that underfed, overworked girl-slave, by God and nature intended to be a mother one day! A child in this country still is a bread winner. And the children of the poor need a guardianship that is not yet accorded them. The “cry of the children” is still heard in Britain. Babies are flung into rivers by baby-farmers, or—far worse—are slowly done to death by hundreds and thousands year after year. And children of all ages pass through miseries and cruelties untold, because (apart even from their taskmasters) this Christian nation, ever bent on

money making, ever sanctioning the graspingness of the few at the expense of the many, has permitted her "masses" so to degenerate that the holy instincts which teach even the brutes that perish to watch over their young are sadly stunted in the lower orders. Yet if these ill-guarded children of the poor grow up in their turn to be wretched parents, do not their angels always behold the face of their Father in heaven, and can we face the Day when the Books of the recording angel shall be opened ? To the seeing eye *these Books are lying open now in the very state and condition of the British slums.* For even of a nation it is true, that it shall reap what it has sown.

That this is not overstating the case any reader can find out for himself. Go into any of the haunts of the poor, and what child-faces you see ! Aye, what tell-tale faces of men and women grown from such childhood ! It is time, surely, that this country addressed herself to the up-bringing of her lower orders. But it is her "higher orders" that first of all need some cleansing, as this book fain would show.

They have yet a further care of unprotected childhood at Leipzig, Town Councillor Hentschel being guardian to every orphan of that city. Leipzig does not leave her orphans to societies, Christian or philanthropic, they are not gathered by the hundred in orphanages. They have an orphan-house at Leipzig, but it is only a receiving house, a transit dépôt ; the children merely pass through it to be examined, and then parents are found for them in the surrounding country.

The present "orphan father" also is a medical man, Dr. Taube's predecessor in that other department, and he

told me how he first set about it. "I looked for a man not too near the city, yet within easy reach, some pastor or schoolmaster who might be fit and willing to supervise an orphan colony; it must be in a district of decent peasant-folk, where a child can have a healthy upbringing, and simple but plentiful food." Leipzig now has about twelve hundred orphans living in peasant homes, forming six colonies, each under a supervising pastor, or other local man of trust (who is paid five shillings a head per annum for these children), and Dr. Meissner declares "the children are doing far better than ever they did before in orphanages." And the extraordinary thing is it hardly costs the city anything. About six pounds a year is paid for each child; the child for this is adopted, *i.e.*, kept like children of their own by the adoptive parents. When I expressed my surprise to Town Councillor Hentschel that it could be done for six pounds a year, or, rather, that a wealthy city like Leipzig should not pay more—"Why," said he, "I have always more offers for children than I have children needing parents. I pick out the best and most trustworthy; if we chose to be parsimonious we could do it at even less." These were his words.

But I thought to myself: see what comes of having a respectable peasant population — humble, self-earning folk on their own plots of land; people who never have much money, but a sufficiency of food, where a mouth more or less makes little difference—where in rural England could one find them! * And not only that the "own bit of land"

* Edinburgh also boards out its orphans—*i.e.*, those chargeable to the poor-rates—whether in all respects with the same results as at Leipzig, Scotch readers may be able to judge.

creates a decent peasantry, with plentiful if humble barns ; it creates a *humanity*, the sort of thing which *can* adopt an orphan.

A "colony" means a whole country-side stocked with villages ; and surely it is a healthy life, the orphans feeling like village children, rather than like charity or institution children. They go to school with the rest of the rising generation, and this in itself furnishes a check on the parents, if need be, for the schoolmaster would have an eye to notice anything amiss with any child. That they should run barefooted in summer is no hardship ; other village children do ; and they are kept as other village children are kept—homely fare, hardy life, helping their parents between school hours and in harvest time, when all the children have holidays in order to help carry the hay or the wheat. And it may be taken for granted that the village pastor has a kindly eye to his adopted parishioners. Surely, it is his natural privilege, if he be a true pastor at all. I have not had time to visit any of these colonies myself, but I was told on all hands, by the Town Councillor, by the two doctors, by my friend the *Armen Director* : "We find that the plan works well, the children, whenever inspected, presenting a satisfactory appearance." They get to love their new home, saying "father" and "mother" to their foster-parents (who may or may not have children of their own, it not being with these people an "adopting" in point of law), and the best proof of affection is that in many a case the bond is not broken when the contract ceases with the orphan's confirmation, which, apart from its religious aspect, in Germany means the ending of childhood, the youthful charges being then apprenticed, or entering service.

There are yearly inspections, when all the children must be brought up to town, and there are quarterly visitations, for which Dr. Meissner has obtained the services of a certain Ladies' Guild at Leipzig, who are being trained for nurses in time of war, but who in the meantime willingly give their peaceful services without pay.

I may add here that some of the poor little illegitimates become "orphans," on their mothers, from absolute poverty or otherwise, ceasing to pay for their maintenance.

The "*Akten*" of each child—that is, all papers concerning its history, past and present—are kept in the archives of the city, and Herr Hentschel allowed me to examine them. To select a case at haphazard. A little lad had been adopted into the family of a fairly well-to-do peasant proprietor, and the boy did so well at school that year after year he carried away the prize. He was fit to be educated at college, said the pastor, the schoolmaster, and also the foster-father; and the latter, enclosing the boy's testimonials, appealed to headquarters—*i.e.*, the Town Councillor Hentschel—to enable the boy to be prepared for college at the city's expense. And he is now being educated with that end in view. For although they only spend six pounds a year on an orphan, they have an eye to all, and if a child proves worthy, the way is opened for him. In these papers I came upon scores of letters from people wanting to adopt a child, and it was touching to read how almost invariably they pleaded they had no child, or had lost an only one, begging for an orphan to "brighten the house." This I saw with my own eyes in quite a number of letters. But inquiries are made before a child is entrusted even to such pleading; it is office-work, "red-tape,"

and upon such a letter being received the police and other agencies are set in motion to find out all about these people, their past and present, before a child is sent to them. This is how they do these things over there.

The reader of *A Colony of Mercy* will remember that there is a similar orphan work at Bethel, and it is because I know the Bethel work that I the more readily believed in this Leipzig way of disposing of the city's orphans. It is just making use of a natural wealth, lying unemployed in many a house, many a cottage, that love for children which God has implanted in the hearts of men and women, fitting them to be fathers and mothers. How much more healthful this seems than even the best managed orphanage! And how little it costs *because* it draws on a natural wealth! In no country are such sums spent on charity as in Christian England, but the question is whether we always have our money's worth for our expenditure.

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If Leipzig is before Elberfeld in this care of children, there is, on the other hand, a development at Elberfeld showing woman as the true "helpmeet" of the Elberfeld System.

The Elberfeld poor work has branched off into a Ladies Guild, a collateral, closely-related offshoot of the civic Poor Administration, but on a different basis and of different aim. This Ladies' Guild is altogether a *preventive* effort; its object is to keep the poor from sinking to that state of poverty which becomes the city's business. The city says, "Every man or woman belonging to us who cannot earn a sufficiency has a moral right to be kept from absolute destitution." Here woman comes in, saying, with that

keener insight which is her prerogative : "The right becomes a wrong if the need can be prevented." It often requires but a helping hand at the right moment to ward off that measure of poverty which forces a man to seek public assistance. It is the first step on the downward road which costs so much, and its prevention may mean the nipping of ruin, moral and physical, in the bud.

Supposing there has been illness ; things have got behind-hand ; there is a bill running up at the baker's, at the grocer's ; the wife cannot keep her little home as tidy as she was wont ; one is easily disheartened, and despair as easily follows ; and what with weakness, what with a black look-out, this is the tempter's hour—yes, it is the first step which, if it cannot be prevented, inevitably leads to the public-house or drives people into pauperism. We in this country are always fearful lest our help should pauperize the people ; but there are other influences at work pauperizing them, and if we only could learn to help with a little more foresight, a little more unity of action, a little more sympathy, putting ourselves in their places, we, too, might have results to show, the absence of which we continually deplore.

Now, the Elberfeld Ladies' Guild has successfully gathered up the stray efforts of private charity into a well-planned and well-spending organization. Its main features are these : For each of the thirty-six districts a lady has been appointed, with a lady-coadjutor to take her place if at any time, by illness or otherwise, she be prevented from attending the fortnightly meeting of the Guild. These ladies are civic functionaries, just like the male Helpers of the system ; they are nominated for three years on the

vote of the Guild members, one-third of their number retiring each year, but open to re-election. Any Elberfeld woman, married or single, who has her name entered, paying a yearly subscription of at least three shillings, may be an associate of the Guild ; so also every male inhabitant subscribing at least five shillings towards the funds of the Guild. Many of the present active members have been re-elected again and again, some having been on the district uninterruptedly since the first year (1880) of this useful association, and stress is laid on the desirability that such ladies be active members, *who live within the district*.

Excepting occasional grants towards clearing off arrears of rent, these ladies never help with money ; they help with food, with clothes, and, most important of all, by means of personal influence, providing work also. Yet they are not district visitors in our sense ; they are civic officers. But as true "helpmeets" of the civic Poor Board, they take the helpmeet's place of not judging for themselves, but seeking the steady counsel of the respective male Helper in every case, not appealing directly to him, but through the central office. This seems almost amusing—at least, to Englishwomen, who are so strong in judging for themselves ; but there is a true wisdom in this arrangement, as is perhaps best shown by the mode in which it is carried out ; and if by any chance there be a loss of personal importance here, is it not counterbalanced by the gain which must ever crown hand-in-hand endeavour ?

Some poor woman applies for help—and the petitioner may always specify her need. She may possibly ask for a shirt for her husband, or a petticoat for herself ; for a pair of sheets, for a couple of pillow-cases, or boots for her

children—just anything she feels she wants. Yet these things are not merely given at the applicant's desire. No doubt it is nice that a poor woman should apply to the Guild lady of her district for such a sensible thing as a replenishment of straw to keep her husband's or children's bed clean — coarse holland sacks filled with loose straw being a not unusual sleeping accommodation with humble folk abroad; it is clean and wholesome, if somewhat hard, and can easily be replaced—but even such hygienic request is not granted at random. The Guild lady's business is to make a note of the woman's statement as to her circumstances, wages of husband and herself, number and age of children, state of health—just everything to prove (or disprove) she cannot provide the straw for herself. Endorsed, *i.e.*, recommended, by the lady, the case is duly recorded at the next Guild meeting, and then forwarded by the Lady-President to the central office at the City Chambers with the Guild's request to have it examined. Thence it is passed on to the Captain of the district, and by him remitted to the Helper of that special "ward" in which the woman lives; for the Helper is supposed to have a more or less intimate knowledge of all the working people of his "ward." If they are really poor he probably has them already on his list. If they have never been in receipt of city-relief, he, at any rate, has every facility for finding out all about them; and by his close connection with the police—through the whole machinery of that "red-tape" office—he has a far better chance of arriving at the true state of affairs than the ladies would. He sets to work with that promptitude which characterizes the scheme, makes a report to his

Captain, the case coming up at the Helpers' next Board meeting, and after due and careful investigation it is returned to the ladies through the central office, not with any "veto" or "order," but in such form that the ladies, furnished with all due information, have no difficulty *now* in judging for themselves of the merits of the case.

From several cases of which I copied the minutes I pick out one or two for illustration. A certain woman applies for a pair of sheets and an allowance of straw, her statement to the Guild lady being to the following effect: The husband, a working locksmith, met with an accident three years ago, and is in receipt, therefore, of thirty-four shillings monthly from the National Insurance Against Accidents*; the wife keeps a small grocery store, but business is slack; there is a daughter of seventeen, at present out of work; and, adds the good lady of the district, "the application seems worthy of recommendation." Turning over the sheet, I find this corroboration from the Helper: "Circumstances correctly stated. The daughter cannot so easily find work, being slightly imbecile; the mother years ago was demented and in an asylum for some months." At the next Guild meeting the two sheets and the required straw are duly granted to the struggling woman, the sheets being given her from the ladies' own store, while for the straw a ticket is handed her for presentation on the following Friday to the master of the poor-house, who, among his various other relief functions, attends to the distribution of straw. All this seems pretty complicated

* Which in Germany is compulsory for all workers, male or female.

machinery, but it invariably acts within a fortnight, the lady of the district, of course, like the male Helper, in the meantime having the power preliminarily to relieve any urgent need. It is a sure way of doing things, there is no waste of charity on ill-deserving beggars, while no deserving applicant need fear refusal.

Another case. A woman petitions for a coat for her boy of fourteen, a pair of shoes or boots for a boy of eleven, shoes also for a girl of nine, and, says the lady of the district, "the woman declares that, though very poor, they have never applied for city-relief; they have difficulty in making ends meet, although an elder girl earns a weekly wage, the father at present being out of work." Against the first remark of never having applied for city-relief, the Helper has put "Not true," underlining it with a pretty heavy dash, and adding that the family, though receiving no money, have "up to date been in receipt of seven rations of soup weekly; that the husband is in work whenever he likes, and fully able to provide for his family, but he is shiftless, always losing his berth, the woman upon every such occasion coming forward with all manner of wants. They have always been assisted," says the Helper, "when-ever we could conscientiously do so; but more often than not we have had to use pressure with the husband (*i.e.*, under threat of the house of correction) to do his duty by his family, as he is fully able. We refer the case back to the ladies' own judgment"; then follow the signatures of Captain and Helper. But the ladies have no difficulty in judging now, and at their next Guild meeting the case is refused, the woman at the same time being advised to seek to mend matters at home.

After such fashion that hand-in-hand work is carried on, and, as far as I could judge, it seems impossible that any deserving person should long be left in want, and equally impossible that charity should be wasted, and moral harm be done.

The ladies have a clothing depôt, old garments from the townsfolk being sent them, by means of which they kill two birds with one stone ; for these garments, first of all, are given out to be mended and made thoroughly fit for wear, thus providing work for many a poor woman. And they are not dispensed at random, but when a needy working-man's wife applies, say, for a dress, that dress is made to fit her by due personal measurement. Behold the German housewife, I thought ; and is this, possibly, the reason why poor people never look such guys over there, never presenting the slovenly appearance so well known here, where slum boys wear coats reminding one of their grandfathers, and beggars in the street draggle skirts with flounces and other finery, bespeaking their fashionable origin ? These Elberfeld ladies would not tolerate that. If they thriftily mend the things, they also take off the flounces and trimmings, making them decently fit in every respect for the recipient ; and, best of all, for each garment thus given away some other poor woman has earned an honest penny.

The ladies do other work. They have soup kitchens, one especially for invalids, where good strengthening food in general is prepared. These are under the Guild's management both for allotment and distribution, but the Helper Boards know where to apply, if any Helper requires rations for special purposes ; a hand-in-hand endeavour being the constant aim.

There is also a *crèche*, where infants under three years of age are taken in for the day—not simply at any woman's request, but only after due investigation, showing the mother *ought* thus to be relieved. If, for instance, a husband is found to earn a sufficiency, a mother is told that she is the infant's true caretaker, and that she must not make over that sacred duty to a charity merely for the sake of additional earnings.

And these ladies dispense "holiday grants for weakly schoolchildren," sending scrofulous and rickety children to the saline springs (corresponding to the English "sea-side"), or consumptive children to where they get a plentiful supply of milk, having also a couple of hundred schoolchildren annually under care for ophthalmic treatment.

Evidently a Ladies' Guild can be very useful, especially if it forms an auxiliary to such an organized civic administration as the Elberfeld System. Turn where you like, the results seem encouraging in lessening true poverty, in teaching the worthless that trading on charity will not pay. And, further, it would seem that such a Ladies' Guild is open to any development required by any particular local need. As one scans the vast fields of distress in our cities, knowing, on the other hand, the power of devotion inherent in British woman-kind, a vision rises of a splendid Brigade of Helpfulness affiliated to an Army of Helpers—volunteers both of them, male and female, from the ranks of the nation's favoured classes. Surely, nothing could stand before such joint devotion! The living sacrifice of men and women in *united organized action* alone can solve the Problem of the Poor. What is the meaning of

the many distressing sights in our streets and thoroughfares, but that God Himself is knocking at our door, inviting us for the hundredth time to look in upon the slum-life of the people, and not only to look in, but to rise ashamed and mend it.

III.

VOICES FROM SLUMLAND.

“And their cry came up unto God.”—*Ex.* ii., 23.

SURELY Britain also would say for herself as Elberfeld does, “No man shall starve here if we can prevent it!” What a boon such a systematic attempt at public help would be ; not doles of charity, for the respectable poor feel this keenly, but the city rising to breast the storm as a community when the individual struggler, unaided, cannot but sink.

England has a marvellously established Poor Law, so splendidly worked out as a statute that some German legal authority has written a big volume about it, saying that no country has such a well-conceived Poor Law, which is true theoretically. No one from the legal aspect could write a volume about the Elberfeld System ; it never reached the dignity of law. But the English Poor Law is like a splendid edifice on a weak foundation, being built up on the assumption that no man should require the community’s aid till he be absolutely destitute. Surely this is a principle of the dark ages, something like saying no sick man is in need of a doctor till his case be quite hopeless. Look at your English popular proverbs : “Prevention is better than cure,” and “A stitch in time saves nine,” and say : What is the use of such a Poor Law, even though it

be an admirable edifice ? The stitch in time is needed, the stitch in time ! As a matter of fact, the English Poor Law, under which we all so cheerfully pay our rates, stands condemned in every starving, ragged person one meets about the streets. Its great pillar is the workhouse, that horror of the poor. England is the country of freedom, the sacred liberty of the person being an article of faith, as we know, and yet we will not really help the poor till we can garner them like so many broken sheaves into the workhouse. It is so, despite out-door relief. There have been proposals of changes lately ; evidently it is being felt by the thoughtful that there is room for improvement. Why not sweep it away altogether, and start a more hopeful line of things ? I read somewhere the other day that the present guardians are more like guardians of the rates than guardians of the poor. Look at the Elberfeld Helpers by way of contrast and say if it is not so ! And yet these " guarded " rates cost the British rate-paying public a great deal more than an Elberfeld System would. The English system is a costly machinery, an upkeep of workhouses, a paying of officers ; but this German system rather is a stretching out of individual hands, a going forth of individual feet, unpaid hands and feet, personally to inquire into every case of want and to supply its need, if a true need, before it turns into destitution. The English system waits till the brokendown beggar comes up tottering to its threshold ; the Elberfeld System goes out to him—no, not to " him," not waiting till he be a tottering beggar—it goes out continually, systematically, into the dwellings of the poor, slipping the helpful hand beneath the weary head, speaking the kindly admonishing word, or, if need be, refusing help, applying

the pressure of a wholesome discipline instead, by means of what *it* calls a "workhouse"—a house, that is, for loafers' correction by means of work; it does all this, and with the result that the number of the chronic poor diminishes every year, the city's expenses for poor-relief having been cut down since the introduction of the system by one-half. Might we not indeed do well to work out a London, a Liverpool, a Glasgow or Edinburgh system on some such lines for ourselves?

We have not only the Poor Law, say you, we have a wonderful amount of private charity, of Christian effort radiating from the Churches—we do help the poor. So we do; we pay our heavy poor-rates, and we resort to our pockets continually to do the work the rates leave undone. And yet the poor go starving, ragged, and fireless every winter, and there are heartrending accounts of distress as soon as inclement weather sets in, throwing men out of work. Surely there is something radically wrong! There is. We have, for one thing, forgotten that old saying, "Union is strength." There is an enormous list of charitable societies and Christian agencies in this country, and yet the poor go hungry every winter, and yet they go ragged and fireless, slipping down lower and lower from sheer despair. And what of the habitually submerged, those we call the "lapsed masses," actually inventing a name, as though that sort of thing formed part of the regular economics of a civilized country. Why have they lapsed? Might not at least half the cause be looked for in the Christian community from which they have lapsed?

As for Church work, or, rather, lay work in connection with the Churches, I trust I shall not be misunderstood, but

I was much struck when an Elberfeld pastor—one who knows this country—said to me, “You will never do much in England really to better the poor while district-visiting is a sort of ‘craze’ for benevolent ladies.” It almost took one’s breath away, for some of us think we are doing such devoted work. But I presume he meant what a certain well-known preacher the other day must have meant, when he described the Christian young lady’s district-visiting, ending by saying : “If I had been that poor woman I’d have thrown her tract after her. Why didn’t she roll up her own dainty sleeves and wash up the poor woman’s dishes instead ?”

A “craze,” or suitable pastime for Christian young ladies and well-meaning women in general—is it not so ? taking honourable exceptions, of course, for granted. Is it not almost a fashion here to do Christian work ? A girl takes to tennis-playing or cycling, because everybody does ; and she teaches in a Sunday school, or busies herself about a district, because it is expected of her, and because it is a very proper thing, giving one a sort of Christian standing. So it is, and so it does ; but alas for the poor, and alas doubly for ourselves ! We encourage them to trade on religion—quite unconsciously we do—and as for ourselves, are we much the better for our work ? Let us try and look a little at Christianity, what it really is, what it really would do for the world and for ourselves ; perhaps we shall find an answer.

Without doubt, it is a very proper thing for the Churches to have “a work among the poor” ; a Church would feel lagging behind its neighbours if it had not some “mission” ; so they tread on each other’s toes in the slums. But the missions will never really improve the slums till those that

send them learn a little more for themselves about Christ's Christianity. As for the practical result, let me illustrate it by a characteristic little occurrence. In a certain city a slum-dweller died, and five coffins were available, five out of the six missions in that half-mile district thinking it their duty to bury the man, charitably disposed to do so. I have this from a minister, who tells me this story is the talk of a slum he visits. I confess it sounds grotesque, but it only illustrates a fact. A clergyman friend of mine once attended a funeral, not of an altogether destitute parishioner, and found himself one of half-a-dozen clergy, that dying person having enjoyed the ministrations of Church, Chapel, and Mission Room, ritualistic and evangelical, to ensure his everlasting peace. And do we not know that some of the poor ingeniously manage to spread their children over two, three, or more Sunday schools with a view to the Christmas bounty or annual treat? It is what is called "overlapping" in this country. Six missions in a slum ought to make a slum impossible, yet they seem only a reflecting back upon the Churches! If these—nay, if the true Christians within these Churches really lived up to their Bibles, one fain would show that no slum-dweller need die in want of our coffins. Society is an organism, and the slums are what they are just because the Christian community is what it is. The world is the world, we know; but if the Christian community lived up to its profession, much in the world would take a different course. For Christians are called to be the salt of the earth—but what if the salt have lost its savour? Let us look, then, a little at Christianity, what it really would do for the world, what it really expects of us.

Surely there is no better test of the religion we profess than this : " If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink." This is plain, simple, and straightforward. Never a word, you will observe, about our being anxious concerning his "inward state" ; never a word about our seeking to convert him. The New Testament, it would seem, has a view of its own in this respect ; it would teach us, would it not, that the power of conversion is not ours at all, but that the power of charity is, the power of love is, thereby to prove *ourselves* children of the Kingdom ? Feed him ; give him drink—that is all, yet how much it means ! It means our own true conversion, does it not ? And perhaps the conversion of the "enemy" then would follow.

Christianity is far more simple than many of us dream, but it is thoroughgoing ; it is ever laying the axe to the *root* of the tree. At the very outset of Christianity the strange advice fell on the ear of the multitude : " He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none." It was spoken by the Forerunner ; but it is of the very sum and substance of Christ's practical teaching, gathered up by the Apostle when he says : " Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Could there be these perishing slums in a Christian country, could there be the ever-recurring cry of the starvation of thousands, if we—if only the so-called earnest Christians among us—had really learnt the simplest lessons of the Christian life, starting from that keynote of the two coats ? If we had, the millennium would be at hand. And mark, the suggestion is not, Give away the worn-out coat—the thing you do not want any longer ; the thing you easily

can spare. No ; it is the unconditional spirit of unselfishness, the looking on the things of others *as* we look on our own things ; it is the Christian self-denial *in order* to better those about us. But judge of our so-called charity. Is there the man, the woman, among us who goes on wearing a shabby coat, a dress that has got old-fashioned, in order to new-clothe, indeed in order to clothe at all, a brother, a sister ? The fewest of us do. If as a Christian community we did, the salvation of the world were at hand.

But these are parables. The second coat means more than coat or dress ; it means a yielding up of that which costs us dear ; it means the deliberate putting aside of self, which alone can ensure that those around us are the better for our Christianity. But we always want the big slice for ourselves—we even think it our natural birthright—and having had our fill, we send the leavings to the hungry, if we do as much. But that is not Christ's Christianity. And that is why our tracts and Bible readings do not greatly benefit the people ; we do not live up to them ourselves. Do we not sit down to our own comfortable meal with something like this grace : " Lord, we pray Thee, bless to us these gifts of Thy bounty, and of Thy goodness remember those who go wanting ? " One hears that sort of " grace " oftener than one would think. Can you imagine Christ's sudden presence in such dining-rooms ? Would He not say : " *I* have been standing these hours at the street-corner yonder, hungry and shivering ; I have had no breakfast, and My clothes are very thin. Why did you not call Me in ? " But we cannot, or we think we cannot. We say our " grace," and sit down to our dinner, leaving the hungering stranger at that corner. How could we possibly

bring him in ? This is modern Christianity, but it is not what Christ meant when He declared His Kingdom to be the leaven of the world.

Compare our evening parties with Christ's : " When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again ; but when thou makest a feast, call the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind, for they cannot recompense thee." How widely apart Christ's sayings and our doings are ! Yet we call ourselves by His name. Say you, these things are not to be taken literally ? Why not ? But, supposing they were given only to teach the spirit of the Gospel, is our social life, even faintly, governed by that spirit ? Nay, truly, how far we are, most of us, from the Kingdom of Love ! Will any earnest reader look up for himself the simple practical teachings of the New Testament, *few, indeed, of which we follow*, and will he remember that Christ, giving these teachings, added the simple question : " Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ! "

There is another test. " He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen ? " Who is our brother ? The " brother," surely, is not merely the fellow-believer, the man who sits next me in church or chapel. My brother, my sister, is every ragged man or woman in the street. Now, do we love them ?—*love !* Yet we say we love God. John says we cannot love Him without loving that brother. And our Christianity is not worth the name if we, as a Christian people, say our morning and evening prayers, living decent lives—not having much of a temptation to live otherwise—

going to church to comfort our own souls, *while these fearful slums accuse us to our face.* This being so, surely not much harm would be done if we were to pause awhile in our efforts at carrying Christianity into the slums, and first sat down to learn for ourselves that fundamental lesson of the two coats. *The masses will never be reached except through our own hearts.* And maybe both we and the "lapsed masses" shall find ourselves nearer heaven by a long step, when we have learnt that lesson. How the people would begin to believe in the Churches, in the saving power of the Gospel, if they could see our own salvation, even to the extent of that second coat!

It is because we have not learnt it, not even half understood it, that as a Christian nation we are in our present social condition.

There is nothing like a sketch or two from life. I was sitting over my fire a few evenings ago, while supper was being put on the table. It was a wretched night of storm and snow, when a quavering voice rose from the curbstone—a woman singing a hymn; they are always singing hymns, these lost and undone creatures—God help them! "There is a happy land," the voice sang shrilly. I went to the window, and there stood a woman in the whirling flakes, the wind whistling through her thin shawl. "There is a happy land, far, far away." If it had not been quite so bad a night some penny would have been tossed to her by a thoughtless passer-by—a penny to send her to the well-warmed public-house, and only further on the road to perdition; but that night everyone hurried past, anxious to get home. I watched her for a considerable time. *Why did I not go out to bring her in?* I might have given her a

cup of tea, and I daresay I could have found some "second coat" for her ; why did I not ? The fact is, with this queer civilization of ours we cannot, or we think we cannot, and yet the New Testament says we ought. Though our pitying soul is roused, we only look at such a poor woman—woman in every respect like ourselves, except that, for want of the environment we have had since the day of our birth, she has slipped lower and lower, till one hears her sing of the "better land" on the curbstone on a night on which one would not turn out a dog, and one looks at her from inside one's own cosy chamber and does *not* go out to bring her in. Yet Christ will say one day: "*I stood on that curbstone.*" I know that—with a blush of shame I know it—and I vowed that night I would write something to call up the blush on many another face for letting a fellow-creature, a woman, stand on the curbstone in such a condition, so that even if I shall have to meet her, a condemning witness, on that Day, she may yet perhaps say some good was done that night ; a seed was sown, from which a work has grown, and such singing beneath the windows of the comfortable has become impossible in a Christian city.

And I remember a few weeks ago, before the frost had set in, how another woman, in broad noonday in the pelting rain, also set up a hymn in the street. She was bareheaded and barefooted, and I again looked out, but not long, for the police came up, sending her away. Now I know why she was sent away ; it was because of the bare feet and her all-too-shockingly ragged appearance—a disgrace in broad noonday in this respectable city. I never heard that a policeman otherwise ever stopped any singing beggar or other noise-producer in the street. That same

afternoon a clergyman called, and I spoke of the miserable vision on the noonday street. "Oh," said he—and he is a good man, climbing the stairs of poverty faithfully—"one often has to steel one's heart; the woman very likely could have had shoes on her feet but for some brute of a husband, who forces her out in such weather, and in such condition, to bring in money for the public-house." As if that lessened the horror, or did away with one's responsibility! And on my urging, "The people would not be quite so bad, nor drunken husbands quite so brutal, if they were not of that wretchedly homeless race, it is that which does it"; said he—and this is an awful speech to record—"You cannot put a pig into a drawing-room." What a judgment here upon the nation! for God has not made these people and put them into the world as "pigs." If He had His way they would have their humble homes somewhere, with their own measure of a chance of being as "good" as we are. It is we; it is our state of civilization, which is only a polite way of saying, "each man for himself"—of saying, "the good things of the world for the few at the expense of the many"; it is this "survival of the fittest," invented by the devil, and one of his surest strings whereby to drag souls to hell; it is this which has done it. These people drink? Why, yes, they drink—I leave that for a future page—to be sure they drink, and *so would most of us* if our lives were like theirs. Try to picture to yourself that one-room dwelling, and what goes on there day and night, even if they would be decent.

I spoke to a lady the other day, one eager "to help if she but knew how," and who, being a person of means, is walking the slums bravely. "Have you ever thought

what they do with their dead people—the unburied dead ?” I asked her. “No,” she said. “No,” I echoed ; “we don’t think of these things, yet there must be some scores, some hundreds of dead bodies in the one-room dwellings every night.” If we really had a picture before our soul’s eye of how the poor live and how they die, I think we would rise in a body and with our own hands pull down that national iniquity—the one-room house.* Imagine some poor mother, or a half-grown consumptive son or daughter, dead at last in that one room. This is passing over the many weeks of lingering death amid the living ; picture to yourself these weeks, and in all probability but one bed in the room. But now the weary struggler is at rest ; he has escaped from the misery, the groans and filth, the curses may be of that one room. The poor corpse cannot be “laid out” on a decent bed, for the one bed is wanted for the still living. They get a coffin, but what can they do with it and the dead sleeper within ? It will be standing for two, three days, maybe on a chest of drawers, maybe on or under the table, the little ones of the family taking their meals in the gruesome presence ; and at night—yes, at night—the adult “wakers” will seek to banish the horror—how ? Have you ever thought of the scenes going on night after night in a great city ? And not the presence of a corpse alone, frightful enough though that be, but of the *living* horrors, of

* “One-room house”—this is the Scotch expression, meaning one room serving for a family dwelling in a tenement-house ; used in these pages for its descriptive convenience, and because “one-room *home*,” for irony, seems but adding insult to injury ! See *Life in One Room*, by James B. Russell, M.D., LL.D., Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow, or ask any slum visitor concerning the realities of the one-room life.

drink, and of things following upon drink, witnessed by the children of tender age ; what do you think goes on here and there about the one-room city, while you lie modestly in your comfortable bed ? A "city of the dead," surely.

Britain prides herself on her hygienic arrangements. Why has she no general mortuaries to receive, under compulsion if need be, the dead bodies of the poor ? Abroad, in certain towns, where the "one room" of British fame scarcely exists, you will find provision made in the cemeteries, and even comparatively well-to-do people, if they have not sufficient accommodation, may give up their dead sleepers—the crowded poor, as the case may be, have to give them up—to the city's care. I remember walking through such a mortuary once, its outer doors standing wide open, cross-doors at right angles with air-swept passages, the inside consisting of plate-glass compartments—locked, of course. The dead were all visible, each in his transparent chamber, ready for burial, and a peaceful sight it was. "What are those strings going up ?" And, to be sure, they were electric bells, each wire rising from a ring slipped on a dead fore-finger ; even this precaution was taken, and a bell would be set ringing in the rare case of a possible trance.* These mortuaries are provided for hygienic reasons, and therefore compulsory whenever the coroner, who in Germany has to certify every death, sees fit ; but in this enlightened Britain of ours hygienics somehow never seem to affect us further than our own noses ; the dead bodies of the poor do not

* *Scheintod* (seeming-death)—the English language, curiously enough, has no adequate word.

interfere with our comfort, so we let them alone. Were some pestilence to threaten, the Angel of Death going forth from the overcrowded slums to smite us and our first-born, then perhaps we would grow careful.

But the dead in the one-room slum-dwellings, indeed, are not the worst horror ; it is the polluting presence of the living. What *do* you think are the nightly visions of many a slum-child, its experience of its own parents, drunk or not ? What faintest chance has the morality of a slum-child ? Yet these children are the rising generation, the ill-guarded boy growing into a coarse-minded youth, and into a man of whom a clergyman can speak as a "brute of a husband" and a "pig !"

Whose fault is it ? Is the city not answerable for her citizens ?

Some of us think much of Ruskin. Read what he says about the absolute necessity of surrounding child-life with nought but beautiful pictures, with harmony, with music. Then what of the music cradling the slum-babe ?

Go up any of these wretched stairs and you find the wee toddling things crowding in corners by the half-dozen. There is something wonderfully sedate about a little slum-child ; it must be that they never have anything to play with, getting, as the saying is, "more kicks than ha'pence" as soon as they can crawl. What can they do but sit sedately, yet with the sweetest smile on their grimy little faces, when you invade their domain ?

The wistful smile of these slum-babes ! Yet think of the influences on their little souls of what science calls "the impact of impressed forces"—forces of uncleanness all about them, by day, by night. God help their little souls !

And twenty years hence they will be men and women, and we shall say—if only they did not drink !

That fearful one-room house ! I have looked into some where they drink, and some where they don't drink, and I declare the state in both is an iniquity crying to heaven day and night. And let me say it was in a house where they do not drink that I felt for the first time what Christ must have felt when He wept over the city.

That was in Glasgow ; I went to see something of "how the poor live" in that wealth-gathering place. There was a woman not much over thirty, good-looking and well-spoken—she may have known better days, perhaps, before she married. Her husband was a carter, earning twelve shillings a week when in work, but how often was he thrown out ! He had been for ten weeks out of employment that winter. They had three boys between four and eleven, and in the dirtiest cradle I ever saw lay twins ! The woman told her story simply, how that winter they had starved, and starved, and how in the midst of that starvation the little pair were born ; they were five or six months old now, but she still fed them with her own starved life. "I cannot afford milk," she said. All she had for herself, even now that things went better, was a cup of tea and a piece of bread, with a morsel of cheese or bacon at best, yet nursing twins. She had not been out since the birth of these children. "I feel so disused to the air," she said, "I grow faint-like going along the street." Poor thing ! it was something else ; "faint-like" with a mother's heroic struggle for the life of these little twins.

That she was a respectable woman and trustworthy was evident from the fact that she was employed as a sort

of under-factor, collecting the rents of all that stair for the landlord's agent, who paid her for this little trouble, not to say honesty, at the rate of ten shillings a year ! She thus often had three or four pounds lying in the broken teapot which served for a cash-box. "Is that money never any temptation to you ?" "No," she said, "I cannot say it is." No temptation ! This were fine testimony, even if she had only herself to think of ; but she was a starving mother with five hungry children. No temptation ! This is heroism. "I do not know how we lived through the winter," she said, "for ask relief we would not ; it was terrible sometimes, but we have pulled through"—the eldest boy pulling through an attack of pleurisy at the same time. Maybe the doctor helped a little. I know that a neighbouring mission has since come to the rescue.

The only thing I could learn against the husband was that "he is not quite as clever as he might be—a slow sort of a man" ; but his slow brains, after all, cannot be called a crime, nor yet his fault, considering how, probably, he was born and reared ! He does not drink ; he does his dull best as a carter at twelve shillings a week, when he can get thus employed ; but in wealthy Glasgow no doubt there are many carters, and some sharper than he, and thus he often cannot get work. And this is how a slum-family "pulls through"—God knows how ! If they had an Elberfeld System at Glasgow that woman would not be left to grow "faint-like" in her brave struggle, and if the carting failed, a weekly fourteen shillings or so, or its equivalent, would be taken to her by the Helper, and that *on behalf of the wealthy city*. Or one would help that husband to earn his week's wages in some more certain way.

The twins' cradle, positively, was as black as though it had been up the chimney, but how should the woman be blamed, considering the circumstances ? The Elberfeld System, through its Ladies' Guild, would see to it ! The woman had a dress on, which—one could tell by its flounces and frillings—once had decked a lady fair ; the Elberfeld Ladies' Guild would say this come-down finery is most unbecoming, for it looks slatternly and is thus an influence for evil ; but what would the Elberfeld Guild have said had they seen what I saw ? "This dress looks rather thin," said I, meaning that somehow the poor woman's bones and angles all showed through. "Look," she said, unpinning her bosom, for the garment had not a button left, though it had flounces and frills ; "look," and—good heavens ! there was not a scrap of under-garment beneath. Probably, like some bird-mother plucking her own feathers to cover up her young, she had torn up the one or two under-garments she may have had to wrap the infants in, for they were wrapped in loose pieces of calico and flannel, and it was all they had. And this is how a woman who does not drink "pulls through" with a husband who does not drink, both being honest and doing their best. And Glasgow is a Christian city, and a wealthy city, and a charitable city ; but then there is survival of the fittest in Glasgow city, and such things are possible in the Glasgow slums. Yet Glasgow collected between eight and nine thousand pounds during that winter's distress ; London a few years ago raising a fund of seventy thousand pounds to tide over her "unemployed." What money we spend, yet never in really helping them.

Do you care for another example of how the poor live ?

I have the following from an Edinburgh friend. That friend herself is a struggling widow, there being many a pinch the easy-going^s know not of among those even that have to be "ladies." But the poor woman in question also is a widow, an old granny. Her husband had been a working-man in decent employ, and after she had lost him she kept herself by charing. But there is no charing nor much else left for a broken-down granny. She had lived with a married daughter, helping her to bring up a young family; but that daughter is dead, and the children grown up—some in service, all of them earning their bread, but not thinking it their duty to remember the granny. The Elberfeld System would keep them up to that duty! She is absolutely destitute, but to the workhouse she will not go. So she is out in the streets by six in the morning, these bitter winter mornings, searching the dust-boxes for bones and other refuse before the dust-carts empty them, as is done in Edinburgh early in the morning. My friend's servant, having noticed the poor old woman, is kind to her, doing up the bones and tea leaves and other kitchen leavings in a separate parcel for her, so that she need not pick them out of the coal-dust and cinders. The bones and rags she thus collects day after day she sells for a few coppers, and that is the poor creature's living; and she has to be sharp, moreover, to get it, for other women are out in the morning on the same errand, and some may be younger and stronger. Good heavens! what a picture—these women, like jackals, or other wild things of the desert, slinking about our doorsteps in the dark frozen mornings while we are yet in our beds, picking their living out of our dust-boxes! They will slink past the doorstep

of Christian and worldling alike. What do you think will be going on in the great pitiful heart of Christ as He looks down upon the city? We awake to our own life presently, rising to our cheerful breakfast and respectable family prayers, "Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast kept us in peace this night!" and such a poor granny goes home to her empty grate, having possibly found some pieces of bread in a dust-box, or meat hanging from a bone, for the cooks of the wealthy are careless. And yet this is a Christian city, full of merciful people; we pay our poor-rates, and there are plenty of district visitors, yet such a picture goes up to the silent heavens in the hard-frozen morning.

Such a picture, no doubt, is possible in every slum-keeping city where the house refuse is put out in boxes over night; it will not be possible in all parts of London because of the more permanent dustbins. But then the poor will only be driven to some other equally miserable expedient, or they die of starvation, as winter after winter they do. Shall we ever be able to say we could not help it? Will the condemning answer not rather be: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem—but *ye would not?*"

This is "how the poor live"; and how do they die? Here is a cutting from a London newspaper showing how they die, throwing a sidelight at the same time on "the horrible districts where the poor of London are heaped together—live one cannot say. How many places must there be like — Street, Mile End! There, in one little filthy room, huddled together, were a mother and her full-grown son—Norah Morris, the widow of a seaman, and John, a labourer. The place could barely be called a room;

it was merely a roofed-in space, but part of a house ; rent was taken for it, and these people were allowed to use it for a habitation. For a window was a small piece of corrugated glass stuck in between the tiles. For furniture there was nothing but dirt and evil smells. In daylight it was dark ; but that mattered little, for poor Mrs. Morris was ill, and might better waste her life away not knowing how the days went by. For five years the Morrisises have lived in that hovel—for five years 1s. 6d. a week has been taken from them for rent. Mrs. Morris lay in a corner on a heap of rags. The son was out of work. A pitying neighbour now and then brought in a cup of tea, and at last she found the wretched woman dying. The parish doctor came, and when he had borrowed a candle, saw the pitiful object in the last moments of her misery. He speedily sent for a cab, but before it came the woman had died of bronchitis, heart-disease, and want of food. When the inquest was held, the doctor said, 'It is a horrible room ; I would not let my dog live in it. The whole house is in a wretched condition—filthy, dilapidated, and utterly unfit for habitation. Its very staircase is rotten and dangerous, and I had to use my hands as well as my feet in going up.' ”*

* Some readers may say that the slum-dwellers constantly protest against the decision of the authorities for destroying unhealthy houses—they do protest, poor things, not knowing where to turn ! I know of a vast area of such houses lately demolished in the East End of London, and it was a heartrending sight to see the people besieging their pastor for advice where to go, with the result that the neighbouring district is doubly and trebly crowded. Maybe the house above described is now pulled down ; the fact remains that not so very long ago a poverty-stricken widow died of neglect and starvation in that hovel, as scores are doing all the year round.

What is the good of inquests ? We have these revelations winter after winter ; anyone who cared might make up "A Book of Judgment and Condemnation" out of mere newspaper cuttings. It is not for want of knowledge that these things continue ; the merciful public is told again and again by a faithful Press how the poor live, how they die, and how wretchedly they are housed ; but this high and mighty England, this country of "Home, Sweet Home," has no remedy for her people. Yet we are always doing, only not just the right thing ; the true remedy somehow escapes us.

Another aspect. Within a stone's-throw from wherethis instance is noted down, in an Edinburgh thoroughfare connecting two fashionable streets, off and on these bitter winter days a girl has been sitting on the stone socket of an iron railing, put there, no doubt, by her relatives for begging purposes. She is fairly, though thinly, dressed—no shawl, no hat, sitting there a shrunken, shivering figure with a pair of crutches by her side. The crutches may, or may not, be a sham ; but whether she be a cripple or not, anyone can see she is a slowly-dying girl of about sixteen, wasted to a skeleton. It would be a cruelty to even the healthiest and strongest to let her sit thus unprotected in the street, when we have had the thermometer ranging between ten and twenty degrees of frost even at noon. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals cry out, and very properly, when a horse is ill-used. I have watched this girl day after day sitting there, a picture of frozen despair, and no one seems to think it his or her business to interfere. Carriages roll by, the police walk by, the Priest and Levite pass by, and the writer of these pages,

with a helpless sense of shame, has passed that girl a score of times, quickening her steps with a sting in the conscience and unable to shake off the pitiable vision for the rest of the day. Toss her a penny ? Of course not. Give her a dinner ? One gladly would go without one's own, taking it out to her with one's own hand, only somehow we do not carry dinners with our own hand to even such a girl in a fashionable thoroughfare. Get her address ? She would not give it, or give a wrong one ; the only thing would be to watch for the miserable father and mother when they come to fetch home the cripple and her earnings, follow them to that home, find out all about them, peremptorily stop that cruelty to an evidently dying girl—indeed, take her away altogether from their tender mercies, for have we not quite a number of institutions to take in such girls ?—and either help the unnatural parents, if they deserve help, or put them into a house of correction for a time if they don't. Is there no one in Edinburgh with power thus to act ? This is how the Elberfeld System would act, and act promptly. Such a vision as this girl is an absolute impossibility under that system. Indeed, apart from every public duty how many Christians, or would-be Christians, pass this girl in their daily walk ! The writer of these pages is powerless in the matter, save what power may be given to her pen ; but that girl has been a burden on her conscience these days past.*

* Some weeks after the above was written, the writer—not without repeated effort—did succeed in tracing the girl to her home. What a home ! A wretched, drunken mother with a consumptive husband quite past work (not the girl's father), the poor cripple, discharged from the Royal Infirmary after an operation, evidently being bread-winner and drink-winner ! The next

This girl is but an example. Only across the road from where she is sitting there is a blind man day after day (whose blindness is no sham, one can see), a sturdy, strong-looking fellow, dressed in warm fustian, seeking to sell bootlaces, with a paper pinned on his coat bearing the usual legend of such cases: "Kind friends, pity a poor working-man, who lost his eyesight," etc. Why do we allow that? Indeed, he takes his turn with another blind one, who, on alternate days in that selfsame spot, sits reading aloud the Blind Man's Bible. Why do we allow that? Bootlaces and Bible are merely a species of begging, and the blind ought either to be helped, or shown how to help themselves decently; in any case, and for the city's honour, they ought not to be allowed thus to make capital out of their sore misfortune. To add yet to the notoriety of that short thoroughfare: Within ten yards of that blind man's station you may almost any day see a one-legged youth, one of those street-artists who cover the pavement slabs with pictures in atrocious colourings, writing the

step was to inquire of the City Police; but all one brought away thence was the cheerful assurance that there is *absolutely no law in the land to protect such a girl*. Being sixteen years old, such a poor daughter of a miserable mother enjoys the freeborn Briton's liberty of being slowly murdered on the noonday street. Charity could only step in if of her own free will she prayed to be delivered from her mother. All the police could do was to stop the girl's being an eyesore by that iron railing, leaving the writer with the unhappy knowledge that in all probability she has only made life so much harder for the poor cripple at the hands of her ill-conditioned mother! Yet to be just to even such a woman! Here she is with a slowly dying husband and a slowly dying girl—no Elberfeld System. When she has buried them both she may drink herself to death, there being no "law to interfere." O country of free-born Britons! To be sure, she could apply at the workhouse for her invalids; but why should she while begging pays, and the police can be circumvented?

information for the passer-by on an additional slab : " This is how I earns an honest living." This particular street-artist happens to be a cripple ; as a rule they are mere beggars, hale and sound. Why do we allow that ? Yet, to be just to the poor " artists"—some, if educated, might make decent draughtsmen, or mechanics of some sort. Heaven knows what latent powers are rotting in these slums !

Why do we allow the manifold street noises of organ-grinders and all that class, which is only a species of begging, demoralizing the beggar and the giver alike ? Indeed, it is a species of blackmailing of the thoughtless public besides, for this sort of thing is quite a trade, and a trade which pays. It is even more than a trade ; it is a sort of " farming," a sort of sweating. Do we not know that these organs are hired out, just as cabs are hired out, by the day ? It would be interesting to know what sort of moneyed people are the owners of the organs. These capitalists probably make a fair revenue out of the grinder, who at any rate himself must live ! How many thousands of pounds, think you, are tossed in coppers across the streets in the course of a year ?

But more. I once watched a certain organ family, husband and wife, at least man and woman, for a considerable time in London ; they carried a cradle with them slung to the shafts of their instrument, which was one of those piano-looking things on wheels. They had twins in that cradle, or what looked like twins—sham twins more likely ; for one grew suspicious about the matter, observing after some months that these twins appeared stationary, never progressing beyond the six-month stage. They were

neatly dressed too, quite a sight to melt the passer-by's heart; hired-out babes most likely, of that unhappy class, maybe, which in Leipzig would be wards of the city, but which in London may with impunity be slung to a grinding organ. Think of these babies' ear-drums for eight or ten hours a day beside that noise, not to mention their nerves. Will you wonder if in after years, *if* they live, they are a brokendown, helplessly demoralized pair, drinking very likely?

Again, this is but a case picked out of a hundred. At one time there was a woman in Edgware Road, between Chapel Street and Oxford Street, that nightly paradise of beggars, also with twins—twins, too, of that peculiarity, the stationary age. And not only night after night did she carry these babes, but a large-eyed child or two was invariably hanging by her dress-folds; and this at ten, or on Saturdays even eleven, at night, when God's little ones ought to be asleep. When spoken to about this mode of gaining a living, the miserable woman's reply was: "Bless you, I don't want no work," owning, unblushingly, that she easily made her five shillings a night "by means of them brats!"

Things like these reveal that awful side of British slum-life which makes us feel so helpless. Our slum-dwellers to a large extent *are* a demoralized mass, but if we are helpless it is with the sting in our own conscience! We cannot, indeed, attack that fearful problem without coming upon sore after sore in our own social and Christian life. For in sooth, and I hope I shall be forgiven the simile, the slum-life of our people is but the noisome discharge of a festering wound in the nation's side. Doctor it? We have to

doctor ourselves; rather we have to own our sickness if anything of a lasting nature is to be done. Matters have got beyond the stage of a sticking-plaster treatment; it is the dull sense of this which makes us so utterly helpless, as winter after winter we face the problem of the unemployed.

But apart from this root-question, supposing the British city rose to the emergency? Supposing that London and Liverpool, Edinburgh and Glasgow, took their stand on an Elberfeld System—the men of wealth, of wisdom, of education, and, above all, of Christian experience, coming forward to enrol themselves into a British Army of Helpers, Britain's true Salvation Army for the saving of her people—that, for one thing, would be a sure means to lay bare those national sores! Is this suggestion merely the present writer's dream, altogether too ideal to be thought of?

In another place I have directed attention to the often overlooked fact that the great thoughts of God's Kingdom, the helpful thoughts for the bettering of humanity, are never the property of any one person, but crop up here and there, independently and often simultaneously, *when wanted*! Within these last few years there appeared in the London daily papers a series of letters from the Mansion House. It was Sir George Tyler who originally made an appeal through the Press, which, having been supported since by every out-going Lord Mayor, I herewith transcribe *in extenso* :—

“THE POOR OF LONDON.

“*To the Editor of the ———.*

“SIR,

“Will you allow me to appeal through your columns for a measure of personal service on the part of a few residents

in or near London in connection with this subject? Early in last year a conference of the titular heads of the churches of all denominations and other persons was convened by my predecessor to consider the question of dealing with London poverty. The matter was referred to a committee, who, after much inquiry and deliberation, proposed the establishment of Friendly Workers' areas, whereby the inhabitants of each district in London could take charge of its own poor with every hope of effectually grappling with the problem presented in those centres where the scheme might be put into force.

"At a further meeting of the conference in December, 1893, it was determined to empower the committee to select four experimental areas in London to test the practicability of the proposed scheme. Since then the committee have conferred with the local clergy and residents in certain selected areas, with the result that arrangements have been made to commence the work as soon as a few laymen of earnest purpose can be found to accept office as chairmen and honorary secretaries of the inter-denominational committees.

"The selected areas fairly represent all types of the population, and the position of chairman of a committee would open up a wide field of interesting work for any person of administrative capacity, with reasonable leisure. London is so vast and the selected districts are relatively so poor that the committee have no means of finding the necessary officers to make the scheme a success, except through the Press. I have, therefore, pleasure in inviting persons of experience and leisure, who are willing to fill the posts of chairmen and honorary secretaries of the inter-denominational committees now in course of organization, to communicate with me at the Mansion House. I may add that the services of young men, to undertake the duties of honorary secretaries, are desired, equally with those of men of maturer years, to fill the more responsible posts of chairmen.

"The inter-denominational committee is an interesting experiment, which, if successful (as with sufficient voluntary personal service it ought to be), will inaugurate a work likely to

confer great and far-reaching benefits upon the poor of London and its inhabitants generally.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"GEO. ROBT. TYLER,

"(*Lord Mayor*).

"THE MANSION HOUSE,

"November 6, 1894."

Now what is this but an "Elberfeld System" under a different name, and might this be a proof that the times are ripe for some such experiment? Might not the "Friendly Workers" here called for develop into the "Helpers" spoken of in a former chapter?

When talking with my Leipzig friend, the Poor Director of that City, we kept bewailing the vast size of London as an almost certain hindrance, but the recent breaking up of our overgrown metropolis into civic Boroughs is a matter of much promise, my friend insisting, whenever we talked of these things, that the active enterprise of some far-sighted patriotic Mayor, assisted by a devoted band of Aldermen or Town Councillors, alone could afford any hope of success. In the meantime, here was the Mansion House proposing it for London!

Presently "Reports" appeared, and one knew that a "Mansion House Friendly Workers' Scheme" had been inaugurated. The writer naturally has watched the unfolding of this scheme, and doing so was at once confronted with the discovery, not to say the disappointment, that the Mansion House, so far, only *lent its name*, the Lord Mayor for the time being giving his countenance. This was a blow to her hopes! There is a committee, a good, earnest committee, no doubt; but no committee, however

capable, *could* represent the Mansion House as a civic force! A few scores of "Friendly Workers" have volunteered within these five or six years—but we had better look into one of the late Reports.

"One of the greatest difficulties with which the Committee have been faced was to find Friendly Workers. The total number whose services were obtained by or on behalf of the Committee has been eighty-five. Of these about sixty have drifted away . . ." the remaining score or so experimenting in five selected areas—doing good work, as far as lies in their small power, one would surely say. But what of the writer's hopes was left went down to zero.

Now it will not do to say that this scheme is but on its first trial; the point is, it is a first trial, even a good attempt, but on too narrow a basis. It is no use merely to "appeal" for "Friendly Workers"; they have to be *raised*, *i.e.*, must be called upon as a matter of citizenship, the Mansion House itself in very deed and fact requiring to be the leading "Friendly Worker." As at present constituted, the London "Friendly Workers," whether they count by the score or by the hundred, never *can* have the authority of Elberfeld Helpers, not being civic functionaries; they never *can* acquire any true power to help, not even a rightful financial power. They are a sort of kindly sympathizers, looking up the poor of a given area, and seeking to act as links between the deserving destitute and existing Charities—a sort of improved "Charity Organization" workers, it would seem, to be thankful for *faute de mieux*; but this will never solve the Problem of the London Poor!

Indeed I note the remark of one of the chief promoters

of the scheme, "we seem as much at sea as ever"—*i.e.*, concerning a cure! What else is possible on the lines laid down? not because these lines in themselves are not good lines, but because they are not nearly thorough enough, not nearly comprehensive enough!

Yet, surely, this scheme might be a seed planted. Could its workers (being ladies chiefly) not develop into something like that Elberfeld Guild, which, as we have seen, does such rare service in its capacity of "helpmeet" to the larger scheme? But for the larger scheme *nothing but the Mansion House itself will do.*

For this Friendly Workers' effort indeed is the Elberfeld System in embryo; surely it is possible to put it upon a broader basis, *and make it a civic work in right earnest.* That alone could ensure satisfactory results. The writer—pointing to Elberfeld, to Leipzig, and other German cities—ventures to urge this upon the public. The "Mansion House Scheme" will either remain a mere dabbling in poor-relief (though maybe of a novel sort), with absolutely no lasting gains, or it must in the fullest and completest sense become a civic undertaking; it must be "business"—London's own earnest business. Is it not possible that the Mansion House authorities or any of the newly-elected Borough Mayors should inquire into the Elberfeld System, verifying what has been said in this volume, and work out a "*London System*" equally thorough, equally complete? What are eighty-five volunteers for London, dwindling down to twenty? If London is really to grapple with the "Problem of the London Poor," London will require her thousands of "Friendly Workers," a standing army of good citizens, and not chance dabblers in charity; nothing

short of this will suffice. Is London not equal to it? The writer has endeavoured to show in these pages what can be done—what is being done. Shall Elberfeld and Leipzig have to be told that the British metropolis cannot muster the public spirit, the devotion, the proud citizenship, for a similar work? Surely British honour requires that the reply to this question be an emphatic *No*! Let the Mansion House, let the Borough Mayors, take their stand boldly, claiming such citizenship in the name of British honour; perhaps it will then be found. The need is so urgent that nothing but the completest chivalry of true citizenship will avail to cope with it.

This volume draws upon Elberfeld as the original model, supplying additional facts from Leipzig; but Berlin also has adapted the system to its own great need. Berlin is fast becoming a monster city, approaching two million inhabitants, with a corresponding area of distress. But Berlin raises a voluntary army of 3,300 Helpers! A Berlin Town Councillor writes me, "We do not yet do nearly enough." Very likely not; for one thing, double the number of Helpers would be nearer the Elberfeld proportion. But he adds, "We are at this moment engaged in enlarging our forces." If Berlin can raise over 3,000 Helpers and set about adding to their number, why not London?

And what of other British cities? Is it too much to hope that public-spirited Mayors here and there will be found to set out in right earnest for such noble city work? As for assistants, call them "Helpers," call them "Friendly Workers"—the name is nothing; it is the citizenship which is wanted, a rising of the civic conscience all over the country. And honorary citizenship—that is, it shall be

an honour to be a Helper, representing the city to the city's poor. Each city for itself, but why not put it on a national basis ?

In Edinburgh there is a struggling association doing noble work as far as it is able, which might well prove a starting-point for some such city work, viz., the " Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor," which has lately dropped this cumbrous appellation, adopting the simpler name "The Help." They had their public annual meeting the other day, in the saloon of the Royal Hotel, and happening to be in the northern capital at the moment, I went to hear what was doing. Sparsely enough attended it was—by ladies chiefly—and the very first thing after the proceedings had been opened was a pitiful pleading for funds. This Association has been working for thirty years, and yet, as the treasurer put it, "we are about to die of the destitution we are seeking to relieve." Edinburgh people, very likely, will be thinking they pay their poor-rates, and that the Churches are always at work. The Lord Provost himself, being in the chair, pleaded hard for funds, adding he did not see why Edinburgh city itself should not come to the aid of this worthy Association with a thousand pounds. But one of the audience, at any rate, kept thinking how much better if "The Help" could be taken over by the city bodily, its headquarters in the City Chambers under the Lord Provost's own auspices, its Helpers or Friendly Workers all about the city, the city naturally providing the funds. They tried to show at that meeting how "The Help" lessened the rates. If taken over by the city it could do away with the poor-rates altogether, and maybe the net outcome presently would be a surprising and over-

growing lessening of expense, even as at Elberfeld. What would augur so well here is the fact that even at present "The Help" works hand-in-hand with the police, the Chief Constable Henderson having inaugurated a singular work here—the clothing of poor children by means of the police—turning his men on the beat into a sort of watch over the ill-clad children of drinking parents; about eight hundred children last year having thus been clothed with the city's cast-off garments. Well done, police! So it is plain that even in this country a policeman and a Helper could work hand-in-hand. It only needs a little more expanding, and all that authority could be forthcoming, without which an Elberfeld System cannot work. If the true measure of public spirit were roused in a city surely all that is needed would follow.

Might one venture to propose that just the two or three who that afternoon at the Royal Hotel pleaded so pitifully for funds in order to help the people—the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, the Chief Constable of Edinburgh, and the directors of that Association—should join hands and see if they cannot turn that struggling "Help" into a municipal effort, making it over to the city, as it were, and inaugurating for Edinburgh something like an Elberfeld System?

And if reorganization were needed—well, reorganize, *aus der Enge in die Weite*—from narrow aims to wider, larger aims. Let it be a true city work. The basis is there; it is the out-blossoming which is wanted. Edinburgh seems peculiarly well adapted for social experiments. It has a slum-life bad enough in all conscience, yet it is not too large a city hopefully to grapple with the evil. At the same time, let us not deceive ourselves. It is no light

thing; it means putting the shoulder to the wheel right gallantly. But is there no manhood in Edinburgh to rise to this need? Let us count the cost bravely. Edinburgh has about twice as many inhabitants as Elberfeld, but, for reasons to be shown presently, it has perhaps ten times the number of people in need of being looked after. Five hundred helpers would not suffice here. Edinburgh would at least need her thousand. Will they turn out, the doctors, the lawyers, the professors, the men of wealth generally, will they turn out, the well-to-do shop-owners, will Edinburgh citizens—a sufficient number—come to the fore? Is it not to be thought of? Then Elberfeld and these other foreign cities one day will be your judges, for citizens there do find time, and leisure, and devotion, and public spirit, year after year, to climb the stairs of poverty for the honour of their city. Shall British citizens fail? Have we not seen lately how Britons can rise? Are they not noted for that peculiar quality of courage and devotion called *pluck*? A true Briton cannot flinch, and he has never yet shirked his duty.

“Perhaps ten times the number of people that should be looked after”—this, of course, is a loose statement, but the true figure can only be found, once they *are* looked after! One can only fall back upon a few facts. The Edinburgh Parish Council (Board of Guardians in English parlance) at any given time has an average of 3,500 “cases” chargeable to the rates, including the inmates of workhouses, asylums, and about 500 orphans. But Edinburgh parish-relief does not deal with nearly enough “cases” to ensure proper results! Under the Scotch Poor Law, destitution or starvation by itself does not constitute a plea; a man, a

woman, must be disabled before a Parish Council in North Britain may legally grant relief. One is sorry to note this. Things under the Poor Law are unsatisfactory enough in England, but in England absolute destitution at any rate *has* a claim to be relieved.

The Edinburgh Parish Council costs the ratepayers some £70,000 annually, though it touches barely the fringe of the great need. And what sums in addition are disbursed by charitable agencies! Where are the adequate results? Edinburgh has its slums; it has its street-loafers; it has its cripples, its blind men—a disgrace in the city's thoroughfares; it has its pavement artists, its curbstone singers wheedling pennies out of thoughtless passers-by, pennies making up fortunes for the public-house; it has its miserable tales of human wretchedness; it has its drunkenness scarcely equalled anywhere in Europe. Are these satisfactory results?

Parish Councils have to follow the law till the law gets superseded; but what is to prevent Edinburgh citizens, a noble twice five hundred, from taking matters in hand—under the Lord Provost, as one has ventured to suggest? The rates will not be called for, if poverty otherwise can be dealt with. Yet even a thousand Edinburgh Helpers would find it hard work, since for every case now relieved there are probably ten stitch-in-time cases that should be seen to, probably ten discipline cases also. That is why it means putting the shoulder to the wheel right gallantly! It is not your subscriptions which are wanted, men of Edinburgh, it is your own personal devotion for the saving of the city's honour, for the saving of your own consciences, too, in the face of these terrible slums; your

reply to the question is wanted—" *Am I my brother's keeper?* "

Edinburgh could furnish a noble object lesson, for there is good stuff among her citizens, and if her slum-life is a crying shame, its sorrowful counterpart is found in every other city in Britain.

As I left the saloon of the Royal Hotel that afternoon, where "The Help" had been pleading so piteously for funds, I overheard one of the retiring audience saying "Ye have the poor always with you." Yes; but Christ did not say that *such* poor, such an appalling state of things as faintly depicted in these pages, should continue with us! This slum-life is a special acquirement of wealthy British cities, and it behoves them in the name of humanity, if not of Christianity, to rise and be rid of it.

Why did Christ say, "The poor ye have always with you?" Possibly because He wants to save *us*. Might it not be His way of educating the world, of teaching it what He would have it know about the two coats? Christ always was wonderfully tender to the poor—even to the sinning poor. It was to the rich He said, "Woe unto you!" to rich cities also—"Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida!" meaning the cities that had known His teaching—the Christian cities, therefore, of our time. Woe unto thee, London, Liverpool, Glasgow, with busy feet running the race for wealth! Woe unto thee, Christian England, compassing land and sea to carry My Gospel, yet with the filthy rag of thy righteousness vainly covering the sores of thine own millions! Surely, if He came among us now, He would not have one hard word for these slums; He would weep over them. But He might have many a

woe for the comfortable, church-going, mammon-hardened respectable folk ; for are we not judged, we and our Christianity, by the very presence of these slums in our midst ?

Turning over my Bible, I am struck for the hundredth time by that solemn parable in Luke xvi. Does it not appear strange, to say the least, that the only thing said there about Lazarus was that he was poor, and the only thing preferred against Dives that he was rich and fared sumptuously ? Poverty alone, of course, will not carry a man to heaven, nor will riches invariably compass his everlasting ruin. But the fact remains, and Christ Himself spoke that parable : " Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." This parable has always struck me as very strange ; but there it stands. Dives was not altogether bad ; though lost himself, he would have saved his five brothers ! There is no record of evil deeds against him ; he only lived up to his wealth—exactly as we do ! He gave his " crumbs " to the poor—exactly as we do ! He was simply a rich man living up to his means. " Son, remember thou *hadst* thy good things ! " It certainly is noticeable that there is hardly a sin against which Christ spoke so seriously, and so repeatedly, as against the sin of wanting to *have*, wanting to *possess* ! It must be that He who knew the human heart knew the hardening power there is in wealth, and that is why He warned His disciples against two coats ! That is why He said, " Blessed be ye poor ! " How much more easily we climb a hill when we have but one coat to carry, yet how we cumber ourselves in this life, our heavenward

journey, with the gathering of coats ! Wealth, that is, having our fill, is against true growth. And it dries up true sympathy ; those who have never known want, how should they understand hunger ? They cannot, but for the saving mercy of their Father in heaven, who, if He cannot teach us hunger in one way, seeks another way, since it is assuredly by the gateway of hunger that any of us ever are saved. “ Woe unto you that are rich ! Woe unto you that are full ! ” There is a wonderful unworldliness in poverty, in having nothing, or very little, to tie one to earth. Christ knew that, hence His “ Blessed.” And there is something far more subtle in wealth than we dream—it is just that which prevents hunger. And what a prison-house wealth is ; by sheer habit we grow to need the things wealth gives, and that is not liberty ! Without so much as suspecting it, we are the slaves of mammon. We live sumptuously—as sumptuously as we can manage ; we do good works that really cost us little—our “ crumbs ” these ! The people around us are full of sores, for what are these slums but Lazarus at our gate ?

IV.

HOMELESSNESS : ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

"I have heard their cry . . . I know their sorrows."

Ex. iii., 7.

WHAT, then, can we do for Lazarus at our gate, full of sores, at any rate, as he is, if we cannot say much else for him ?

Why, take him for change of air.

How is it that the British poor are so full of sores—a demoralized, drinking, work-shirking lot, so many of them ? *

Someone said the other day—there having been some talk about the blessings of the Elberfeld System—"After all, it is Germany which hatched the Social Democrat !"
"Yes," was the reply, "and the English slum-dweller has sunk too low even for a decent democrat. He can only wallow in that mud into which you have let him fall."

We are not concerned here to lodge a plea for Socialism, which is the uprising of the people's humanity against the

* This, readers will admit, is the general impression, and often brought forward as a sort of excuse when the wretchedness of the slums is the topic. But Mr. Charles Booth, in his work *Life and Labour*, shows as the result of a careful analysis of four thousand cases of the very poor that only in 18 per cent. the cause of wretchedness is to be sought in fault of character, leaving 82 per cent. to be accounted for by stress of circumstance ! Surely, then, one is right in protesting, if you would "save" the poor, better their environment.

oppression, that is, wrongful use, of capital—against the wrongful use of land too. Yet Socialism, though we may deplore or fear it, and mistaken though it be in some of its claims or means, wages a just battle. It is but in its turbulent youth ; it is “ new wine,” requiring mellowing, and if in this process it should burst the worn-out bottles of our present social system, this can only end in the nation’s gain. Therefore, though the Socialist, like every pioneer, must advance along a line of search rather than certainty, and may mistake his way, the upheaving force of Socialism is in a right direction, and neither can be suppressed nor should be dreaded, being neither more nor less than a new-birth labour of the human race. Why not rather wisely aid it ? We should always read history before we would judge of any present-day movement. Socialists, moreover, mostly are of the true stuff of the nation, since there must be some manhood in a man who even in a wrongful way fights for his manhood’s rights.* He must have some education, too ; but despite British board-schools the people’s education here is hardly out of its infancy. Even that was denied them for long generations. Absolutely nothing was left them into which their manhood could strike root. Driven off the soil, their natural heritage, they have weltered in great cities—they and their children after them—a helpless mass of misery-breeders ; and then, turning round upon them, you call them the discontented proletariat, forsooth !

* It is said that in the War of Liberation many of the West Indian slaves themselves did not so very much care for being set free ; and it has been pointed out that this was the worst feature of an evil system.

Solomon says : "Oppression maketh a wise man mad," the meaning of "wise" here being "a man in his senses." I suppose we all, at one time or another, have had experience of what appeared to us a deep injustice. And how we have reeled under it ! how it maddened us ! making us for the time being altogether different persons than, maybe, we are. For there is nothing a man feels more deeply, nothing which so transforms him — for the worse, very likely — than an injustice against which he struggles in vain. It is because we are made for righteousness that a sense of injustice has such a perverting power over us, making us "mad," as Solomon says. What is madness but a becoming other than we should naturally be, a getting out of our right mind ? Then what of these people ? For generations the dead-weight of an injustice has hung over them, and then you wonder at what they are. Why, they are born in bondage, and bondage has ever left its mark on the man. *Do* you wonder there is no true manhood in your British poor, and that even when you honestly would help them they seem past being helped ? Look into your own heart and life, and then judge the poor. Indeed, in a very real sense, it is ourselves who are answerable for them. I am now speaking of the national sin, of the wrong done to these people, by us as a class, in having allowed a state of things to rule this country which has driven the mass of the people into the slums ; by having (not, perhaps, directly) a hand in an unrighteousness which has made these people what they are. And I want to lay stress on the fact now that we really have a demoralized people to deal with, and that this is so because *oppression* has "made them mad." As a people, as a part of the community, they have sunk

far below what God intended them to be, and the question is whether, recognizing a great national sin, we cannot give them back some sort of an environment where God and their own better nature shall have a fair chance with them.

I have spoken and written concerning the want of an *Own Home* for the people—a clean “Own,” to replace that fearful one room. Said a well-meaning friend the other day : “ Aren’t you rather fanciful with that notion of an ‘ Own Home ? ’ After all, many of us never have what you call an own home—an own bit of land. Most of us rent a house.” As if that met the case ! We have other interests in life, other things to stand to us for an environment in which to live and move and have our being. Some of us live in a sort of inward “ Own ” all along—call it culture, call it noble aim, engrossing service, happiness—call it what you like, we are not exactly starving. But what interest in life, what stake in his country, has the poor man, the man of the people, unless you give him that visible spot which he can call home—the spot to which his humanity may cling ?

It is but human to desire something beyond mere drudgery. Why should the working-man be different from us ? He, too, wants an aim in life, something to live for ; and what can he live for, except for his children, and the one hope that they shall be the better for his manhood’s industry ? But that sort of ambition cannot dawn upon a slave—the man who has nothing left him but to grind for a weekly wage. Britain prides herself on being the land of liberty. But this famous liberty is for the few only ; what manly independence is there for three-fourths of the British people ? And does not some proverb say, “ All work and

no play makes Jack a dull boy?" What play is allowed him, what fair play—room to expand in—for his soul's energies, his ambitions, however humble? The "masses" of this country are "helots," if ever there were such!

It is the will of God that the people—why call them the "common" people? they used to be called "children of the soil" when the world was younger and a little more honest than it now is—it is the will of God, I say, that the people should be *rooted* in their country, and this quite as much for the country's, as for the people's sake, that they might grow to love their country and, drawing their strength from the land of their birth, develop their own true humanity. Can a man be rooted in a city-slum, in a one-room tenement for which the slavery-fed landlord takes one-fourth or so of his weekly wage—aye, a good deal more than one-fourth if you take into account times out of work?

True patriotism is a national need, but how rarely is it found in its integrity—we love so largely our own interests in our country, witness our party politics. With the masses its very basis is gone. What is patriotism but that which, if danger threatens, rises for the own hearth and home—that love of my country into which I have struck deep root? Look at the physical deterioration even of our slum-dwellers! In Glasgow, and, I think, in Liverpool and London, the mass of them *never reach beyond the fourth generation*. Even if a fresh stock comes in, strong from the country, it is wasted away in four generations; and as for the intervening second and third, look at the sickly faces, the puny bodies. Supposing that great European war came off, which some say is bound to come sooner or later, would England merely look on? It is a pertinent question at this

moment when South Africa has drained our resources, and the Chinese, not to say European, complications darken the near horizon. Where could we raise a potent army—from among these slum-folk ? A fine military, let alone their want of moral grit. It is not because of the glories of war one here deplures England's deficiency ; her real want is that deeper patriotism, the absence of which leaves the marrow of the nation to rot away in a city slum. And now look at the great stretches of land falling out of cultivation everywhere, and say if this country has not forgotten the very rudiments of national economy.

One wishes one could seek for the remedy wherewith to help the people without ever and again coming upon the great sore in Britain's side—the land question. It is not pleasant to be a muckrake ; and, after all, it is not so much the fault of the present landowners that the system is all awry ; the mischief has come down the stream of centuries. This country has never had one of those upheavals, terrible while they last, but leaving a blessing behind, such as the Thirty Years' War in Germany and the Revolution of the French a century ago. In the early Middle Ages, the feudal times, the land everywhere belonged to the few, and the "few" can never be anything but more or less oppressors of the people ; one need only read history to be aware of that. The peasantry of Germany, goaded to despair, rose like maddened tigers in the sixteenth century ; it availed them not. But a century later that awful visitation, the Thirty Years' War, made *tabula rasa* of the country, leaving her bleeding and panting, it is true, but swept clean of the old abuses, and modern Germany since has been evolved, with fairer

chances for the people. The French Revolution did much the same for France. But in Britain the feudal system *ipso facto* has survived, and is helplessly seeking to amalgamate with modern civilization, the result being our present social trouble. We would see that well enough if it did not touch us so closely, if it did not mean a rising of the upper classes, not as a political party, but as those who have power, and with a broom called Righteousness. Surely there is land enough in this country to satisfy any reasonable man, and yet leave a fair patrimony for the children of the soil. The proof of this? That the land—vast stretches of it, nearly one-third of this fair realm of England—is lying more or less idle, slipping with Nature's revenge out of the hands that cannot even hold it. Broad acres do not pay their present owners, nor anything like it, and yet from a miserable sense of ownership they cling to the land. But dog-in-the-mangerism is poor policy.

The friends of the people are far from seeking to preach a crusade against the possessing class, for that would not be justice either. They would rather plead with them, with the truly noble among them, to join hands in a large-hearted endeavour to right the nation. Much can be done in fair and legitimate ways. But one might perhaps ask some of them in their own secret chamber, and just for their own consciences, to examine a little into the title-deeds by which they hold their lands. There are strange stories writ on the pages of British history, and stranger stories in the chronicles which somehow do not get into history. Supposing I had a grandfather who, along with some other country squires, surreptitiously "enclosed" a vast common; though, with that forgetfulness which

somehow is permitted to envelop such deeds, the fact were scarcely known now, the family history alone whispering the tale, would not the conscience within me plead loudly for restoration ? There actually was an attempt to "enclose" Epping Forest a score of years ago, happily prevented by the City of London. And what of the land given as presents by short-sighted kings ? Or what of land for which I may have paid my honest coin, but yet land unduly acquired by some former owner ? Is there not sufficient righteousness in this country, love of justice in British consciences, to let one hope that *some* might be found who might be willing, prompted by their own nobler selves, to give back some of the land to the people ? Possibly those who first would come forward would be the very owners whose hands are clean, but who, recognizing the fundamental unrighteousness of the British system of land-tenure, would seek to restore for a higher reason.

British land-tenure has not its equal anywhere. More than thirty years ago John Bright, in one of his speeches on Reform (Glasgow, October 16, 1866), asked his hearers : "Are you aware that half the land in England is in the possession of fewer than one hundred and fifty men ? Are you aware that half the land in Scotland is in the possession of not more than ten or twelve men ? Are you aware of the fact that the monopoly in land in the United Kingdom is growing constantly more and more close ?" These words are substantially true to-day, and they reveal an appalling fact, indicating, as John Bright points out, "the gradual extirpation of the middle-class as owners of land, and the constant degradation of the tillers of the soil." *And the nation at large looks on.*

Again, as *Progress and Poverty* shows, a few thousand men, landowners, have legal power to expel the bulk of the nation from the British Isles ; and the vast majority of the British people have no right whatever to their native land save to walk its streets and roads. *But freeborn Britons acquiesce.*

Even the heathen Chinese has a more enlightened system of land-tenure than that ! This may not be generally known in this country, and one may be forgiven for making it known in these pages. In China the whole of the land belongs to the Emperor, he being the representative of heaven, the people holding it under him at a nominal tax. They are owners to all intents and purposes, and can sell or sublet their portions, the wholesale grasping of vast lands in one hand being entirely unknown there ; and, indeed, quite impossible in a country where small ownership is the natural order of things, and the tilling of the soil an honourable calling. But this also holds true for countries nearer home, like France and Germany, where a moneyed man, if he tried ever so hard, could not make himself "landlord" of half a county, for the simple reason that where the God-intended division of soil, with small ownership in honest and thrifty hands, has not been destroyed, *Naboth's vineyard would always be in the way!* It is only in the British Isles, where large estates in times past have been artificially and often irregularly created, that this sort of thing is possible.* Yet the Chinese system has left a loophole where the money-lender comes

* *Vide* the past history of British kings and nobles, and compare these with the modern doings of trade-lords, even a moneyed foreigner holding an estate running through the breadth of Scotland, while the people that should have a home there are lost in city slums, if they have not left their country altogether.

in, the usurer (the same, in a lesser degree, but bad enough, in France and Germany), and that is why it is not by any means perfect ; it could easily be made perfect by simply adding the Jehovah clause of His own ancient land-law—*vide* the Jubilee Chapter, Leviticus xxv.—where usury is made illegal, and the humble landowner efficiently protected against the tender mercies of the money-lender. See how beautifully the will of God would guard the people ! But the Chinese arrangement, nevertheless, has the advantage over the British system, since millions of people in the Celestial empire are small owners, holding enough land to feed their families and educate their children ; and what more do the mass of the people need ? The tax on such a self-supporting farm is perhaps two dollars (two pounds English value, the present purchasing power of a dollar in China being about equal to that of a pound sterling here), which tax is paid to the central Government. No one can take their land from them—not even the Emperor — unless needed for public purposes, even as with us, in which case the owner is properly paid by the Government for the land he gives up ; and he can simply buy another little estate elsewhere.

By all accounts this arrangement leaves China a wealthy country. It is but a heathen arrangement confessedly, and Christian British landlords might find many a flaw ; but in principle, obviously, it comes very near that ancient land-law written about in the Jubilee Chapter, in which Jehovah says “ *The land is Mine* ” ; saying so because He wanted every Hebrew—or, as we now should say, every British soil-tiller, and there ought to be many of them—to have and to hold his own bit of land.

Suppose we try to go back to that Jubilee land-law just for a model, and to help us out of the confusion into which we have fallen. Is it not possible for the Crown to buy out at fair valuation any one of the non-tilling landlords who may be willing to be bought out? Stress of circumstance will make some of them willing; there need be no pressure; and the "Crown," of course, just means Britain against British individuals. Is this utter folly? The next step would be to set out for a replanting of rural England with wholesome village life, where a man eventually shall have no landlord over him—not even the Crown. For no land out of Paradise can yield a sufficiency for *two* owners—for both landlord *and* tenant. A man, of course, must honestly pay his way into the land, the Crown being interim owner, or part-owner, till he have done so, not in the meantime oppressing him, but helping him. Plenty of honest Britons will be found willing thus to pay their way into ownership by means of their own labour, and if it take them twenty, thirty, or even fifty years, as a family they will do so, and do it gladly for the one happiness of being able to say: "This is home for me, and my children after me."*

Being wise Christian Britishers, and not heathen Chinamen, we would naturally make a few laws and regulations to keep out usury, and any sort of graspingness whatsoever. It could be done by simply following the provisions—as finger-posts merely—of that ancient Jubilee Chapter. Read it. Is it not refreshing to discover how it cares for the poor, leaving quite enough for the rich, yet

* See p. 152.

making it a matter of right and law that every humble man should have his little own ? Look at the social provisions of those days when God was landlord ; see how He took care that even the widow and the stranger should have their gleanings of the harvest, not as a dole, but as a right. How beautiful that social order is, like everything the Lord God has made ! And how splendidly the national economy of even modern England might work, if based on its provisions ! No slavery, then, for the mass of the people, no sweating, no oppression of any kind ; but a rule of mercy, driving away every mean dog-in-the-manger. And it would not impoverish the country, for it is the numbers of thriving owners that really enrich a land.

Why should not something like that Jubilee land-law be possible in rural England, in the Scotch lowlands, for fifty to a hundred acre farms, or any lesser holdings, when it is possible, and *has* worked these hundreds of years as regards London soil, which always *does* revert to its reputed original owner ? Why should not country soil, in some legal way “revert” to those that can till it — the husbandman, one would imagine, being the true original owner of arable land ? Is not the present distribution of soil, in the very nature of things, somewhat awry, ending in a grave disturbance of the national equilibrium ?

We have tried to make land-laws for ourselves, and dictated by man’s graspingness, as they were, they have entailed upon us our present difficulties ; they have brought this social question to a head, which assumes graver and graver aspects every year. Clearly avarice and greed do not pay—not in a national sense ; clearly our own laws have failed. Could we not at least give that ancient

statute a trial, of which, at any rate, we know this much, that God in heaven had the making of it? The wise people who govern the destinies of this country could surely hit on some way of adapting it, without spoiling it, to new-century wants. The twenty-third verse of that chapter should be its backbone: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me"; which, translated into modern parlance, might mean: "The land shall not pass for ever into landlords' grasp. Let there be land-holders among you—call them 'owners' in your short-sighted way, some having more of the land, some less, according as they may be able to give the soil fair usage; but no land-grabbers fattening on the toil of others—for *the land is Mine*, and ye are but sojourners with Me."

We know we are but strangers and sojourners, whether we like or not, for we all die and go hence, utterly unable to carry our lands and our money-bags with us; and our children rarely are the better for our leaving them great possessions. This fact stands written in large letters in family histories all over the country. We *are* sojourners, and not even our greed-won possessions are our own. Why not admit it with a good grace, since it is so? Why not admit frankly that the land is not ours at all, but the Lord's?

And why is it the Lord's? Because He wants every British son He has made to earn his own fair living; because He wants Britons to be men and not slaves. The land is rich—very rich—and if only it could be fairly used, worked with that article called British brains, and manured with that other article, British elbow-grease, the soil *would*

yield its increase,* and it would be found that there are not more people in the country than the country can nourish. There never are. There never was an overcrowded country; but there are overcrowded cities; and this is man's doing, and not God's.†

How simple a thing it would be to solve this social question if man would only learn the lessons staring him in the face, and act on the broad hints God and Nature are for ever pressing on his notice, punishing him with evil consequences if he will not listen, yet ever again saying, "Repent thee, and thou shalt be helped." Is it too much to hope it shall not in future be possible to say that even the Chinaman, heathen as he is, has a wiser land-law than a Christian country like Britain?

To return for a moment to the present state of things—the people's one room in a city slum. Again and again I have been asked, "But what are the poor folk to do, if they can only pay for one room?" Is not this rather innocent? Why should these people live on soil which can only be had at a king's ransom? In our present arrangement, it is always the poorest people who pay the heaviest ground-rents.

In the heart of London the annual ground-rent ranges from one shilling to half-a-crown per foot—in certain places it is a good deal higher. As to purchase value, there is London soil worth £30,000 per acre, and more;

* As Sir Arthur Cotton showed, every acre would bear the sinking of a hundred pounds, and a wealthy country like England surely could afford that!

† In Great Britain and Ireland, all told, there are indeed just about two acres of land for every man, woman, or child, viz., 77,500,000 acres, with a population of 40,000,000.

indeed, it is a well-known saying, and true enough, that many a site in the City is worth its surface in sovereigns—*i.e.*, an inch a pound—the ground-value of all London (about 120 square miles) being estimated at 16 millions annually. The state of things in our other great cities will be proportionate. Now it is in the heart of London that slums abound, their value, of course, being driven up by the neighbouring sites. No wonder the poor crowd together when bare standing-room is so costly, for observe, this is altogether apart from the buildings on the soil. And who has to pay for this usury? Clearly not the owner of the slum, who looks after his own gain, but the poor rookery-dweller. Is not this an absolute iniquity, and bad national economy too? For it is national economy to see to the welfare of the people, not permitting a few bloated owners to sap the life-blood of the nation, unfitting the workers for their true part in the social organism. Why should the people continue where soil has grown to be a luxury? City soil will always command high value, though an exodus of working folk would create a wholesome depression; but why not leave it to the capitalists—great banks, great places of business, great factories—who can afford heavy rents?

The toiler must live near his work? So the banker once thought; so thought the merchant. A generation or two ago they, too, lived in the city, but the age of railroads has made them wiser.

No; what keeps the people in the slums is not the absolute necessity of the case, but that necessity which is twin-brother to self-interest in the classes above the poor. Let us, at least, be honest; self-interest smells a danger

a hundred miles off, or should you say it is really for the sake of the people that we hesitate ? Is it our true interest in *them* which makes us trot out our hackneyed misgivings—"The workman must live near his work," or "the people cannot make a living nowadays in the country ?"

Nor need self-interest tremble altogether in its shoes, for surely we are far from even the hope of that millennium which would see the whole of slumland transplanted into the country. But we plead it is not impossible for some of them, some hundreds to begin with, some thousands, just to make things a little more bearable, a little more wholesome, a little more worthy of a great nation, in the slums that remain. And if the upshot were that the transplanted ones would presently cease from wanting to be carried back daily to the scenes of city toil, would it not lessen a fearful pressure ? Would it not tend to absorb that national grievance, the "unemployed," which surely, if it means anything, simply means that for every "job" going in slumland there are at least two pair of hands ?

But I fear I am here touching upon another sore spot. Have you ever thought that capital actually feeds on the hunger of the unemployed ? I was told in one of our large commercial centres—and I take it merely for an example of city economics anywhere, the state of things which goes by the fair name "market"—that great work-owners undertake what they call contracts, and then put on triple relays of men, working day and night, and giving the factory a holiday when the contract is completed, paying off the men, of course. This naturally is the cheapest way of fulfilling the contract ; but it is a saving of time, and steam, and

therefore of money, at the expense of the working-man ; it means absorbing three men for one, for a shorter period, throwing them out of work altogether when you have made your own profit. No wonder such a city groans over its chronic nightmare—the “unemployed !” Yet, when I reasoned with a man of business in that same city—a Christian man, too, and a great merchant—“Why, it would ruin trade,” he said, “if you philanthropists had your way. We need these people.” So Pharaoh once thought that he had need of the people. So the Jamaica planters thought that they had need of the people. Will anyone dare say one is wrong in calling Britain “a land of slaves ?” *She thrives by the hunger of the masses ; she has need of her “unemployed.”*

It is *this* which is at the bottom of all the helpless endeavours to solve this problem—though we may not be aware of it, as that merchant was not. How true it is we are but the playthings of mammon ! We do not even suspect it.

We need the people ; maybe we shall need them till God will rise as He once rose to teach Pharaoh. When our own interests begin to be touched by that social question—and they are near being touched in many ways—then, maybe, we shall begin to understand.

The British Iron Trade Association a few years ago organized a deputation to Germany and Belgium to inquire into the causes why these countries are threatening to outbid England even in this manufacture. The delegates returned, saying that the reasons usually given here—viz., that the working-man abroad was content to live on bread and water and work for twelve hours a day, taking less wages—was a myth ; that they had found working-people

living better, and above all better housed, than the British workman. These delegates visited many factories, quoting them one after another as inspiring examples, and the present writer may cite here Krupp's famous works at Essen.* Krupp is known as the Iron-King the world over, supplying all the warfaring world with artillery ; they call him the Great Gun-King in Germany. *The king*, who began life as a fatherless boy with a struggling mother, died a few years ago, leaving not only a famous factory, but a well-established and well-cared-for working people—many thousands of them. Now a gun-king very likely has to fulfil contracts, but he cannot be doing it in the above-named way, which is, perhaps, best shown by this : Taking up a newspaper in Germany one morning, I read that Mr. Krupp had bought a summer residence for his men in the Black Forest for £4,000, that he might give any of them that needed it a few weeks of mountain air. A four-thousand-pound house among the Black Forest hills is not a cottage, so he must contemplate this yearly benefit for a good number of his men ; and since the railway ticket in question is a couple of pounds there and back, he cannot be thinking of sending a man for a few days only. I have not myself yet been to Essen, but a friend of mine has, and I have read a biography of the late Gun-King, and all he has done, not only for his works, but for his workers. How, for instance, his superannuated workmen continue in their own cottages with suitable pensions. They say, if a "king," he is somewhat of an autocrat, wielding an iron

* (See their "Report." King & Son. 1896).

sceptre, even in his kindnesses. But a man who has attached to himself over twenty thousand workpeople, not counting wives and children—a settled population—must hold a firm hand over them; for the rest this little story of a Black Forest treat for a tired man speaks volumes. I know that some employers here endeavour to be liberal to their men, but I have never heard of anything equal to this. It might be said it is in Krupp's own interest if by dint of well-spent kindness he turns his mass of workers into something of a beneficent monarchy. Of course it is! Yet think of his thousands of people, his working-men, of whom not one need fear the rainy day, either of sickness, or of old age! He has a right to expect their good behaviour—a right to expect even their wives' good behaviour, a right also to see to the training of their children, and he does.

As to attaching working people to the owner's interest, those British delegates tell of factories, both in Germany and Belgium, where young workers at their employers' expense are sent to technical colleges for a two-years' course of study in order to qualify them for responsible posts, men who by dint of industry have excelled being first on the list of such advantage. They also speak of the wonderful discipline, the steadiness of the workers, their readiness to act on instructions, and they point to the natural effect of all this, showing that the employer thereby gets the maximum of production out of his plant, strikes being almost unknown. It is discipline truly, but a discipline combined with *forethought for the welfare of the employed*. "We think of our men *first*," said one of these

employers to the wondering deputation. Remember that all these workers abroad, as boys in school, as men in the army, have had a training, and will you wonder that one British trade after another is in danger of being supplanted by foreign competition? Yet surely this book is only endeavouring to hold up a candle or two to illuminate matters, if so be that Britain for herself will set about her great problem, finding her own British way of solving it.

There is many a short-sighted business man who thinks "trade would suffer" if the slavery of the great cities were interfered with. Wasn't there an outcry that sugar would rise to prohibitive prices when it was a question of liberating the West Indian negro? As a fact, though slave labour *was* done away with, it has steadily gone down in price ever since, and does not cost one-third now of what it cost then. *No individual and no nation ever suffers for performing an act of righteousness*; the Lord God in heaven is too honest a paymaster for that. Sugar very likely has not gone down in price *because* it ceased being produced by slave labour, but from other causes. What of that? The fact remains that it has gone down, bringing sugar within easy reach of the million, and shaming those ungenerous fears that "trade would suffer" if Britain liberated the West Indian slaves. With this example before her will she not set about liberating some of her own children, those slum-toilers in bondage to capital, in bondage to insufficiency of labour, in bondage to the hard task-master called "market"—aye, in bondage, let us own it, to ourselves, who require the big slice for our own use? They have

been driven off the soil, their natural heritage, and nothing on earth will solve the social troubles which are the natural outcome of this fact but a national effort at restoration in taking the people—some of them—back to the land. It ought to be done for righteousness, and not for reward's sake; but as surely as colonial sugar went down in price, England will find herself a gainer in pounds, shillings, and pence, not to mention an improved people, if she can rise to that act of "justice" of reclaiming her own waste land by means of her own waste labour. It is a clear case of economics.

The writer of these pages does not pretend to be an expert in farming, nor yet a political economist, but some things are patent to any who will open their eyes. She learned a good deal by simply looking about her in the Scotch Highlands. Now the least observant can see that these Highlands, and in a ruthless way too, have been depopulated of their people; but what has disforested those hills? Often in my rambles through those beautiful glens I used to gaze at the silent hills in their glorious bereftness—how they catch every passing cloud, every passing sunbeam, weaving themselves garments of fleeting shadow shot with fairyland colour, forever seeking to cover their naked sides! How they look at one with a human expression almost. If they could but speak, what a story they might tell! The people all gone? Yes, but why are the hills so barren? Surely this is not Nature's work? Is it possible that some "depopulation" has been going on here also, some ruthless disforestation "depopulating" the lower hill-

sides of their natural greenwood, just as the glens have been depopulated of their people? I could not gather any facts to throw light on this question, yet it is no secret that here and there in the Highlands the roots of old forest-trees are found, and not of the antediluvian ages either, though buried now eight and ten feet deep in the "moss." Nature does preserve a record of her history if one chooses to look for it.

Another point one cannot help wondering at when walking about a Scottish valley is this: Why is the soil so poor? However void of humanity these places now are, it cannot be denied that they once echoed with the home love of the hardiest and finest, if wildest, race ever created — a fact no Scotchman will deny, for the Scotch, one and all, are proud that clan-blood has carried industry and strength all over the globe. But that such a race should have originated on the poverty-stricken soil over which one now laments in Caledonia stern and wild is a feat not even resourceful Nature can achieve. No people worth spending breath on ever develops on starvation fare, the handful of Scots now found among the hills surely testifying, despite present hardship, to the fine physique and consequent mental endowment handed down through generations, and permitting the simple deduction that the soil in times past must have been better than it is now.

I could not see further for myself, till one day *The Scotsman* came to my assistance with an article by some unknown contributor concerning the re-afforestation of Scotland. I learned much from that article. My surmises had been correct; the hills did not always stand

lonely and desolate, and, what is more, *they could be replanted now!* It does not much matter for our point whose hand cut down the forests, but if the land now is poor, it is because of that revengefulness of Nature, which is her only defence against the stupidity of man. A valley anywhere will end in impoverished soil if its natural protection, the forest clothing the neighbouring hillside, is destroyed; for the sheltering hill-forest makes the valley-soil, nursing it patiently and gently, withholding the torrents of water which otherwise after every downpour of cloud-moisture come dashing down the slopes, retaining them in its own moss-soil and dispensing them gradually, saturated with replenishment, too, to the arable land—*not* arable now, because the unhindered waters are forever carrying away the humus it vainly strives to gather. Scotland could much improve her economic condition if she set about re-afforesting her lower hills.

Yet how often one is told, even by sympathetic folk in the Scottish capital, that what is now called a "forest" * in their land, *i.e.*, grouse-moors and deer-preserves, after all is the best-paying use to which the Highlands can now be put. *Now!* But what a story has gone towards that "*now!*" And even now it is a sort of paying-use, involving a fearful amount of waste. Stalking a stag costs fifty pounds (a pretty penny for killing a poor brute!), and shooting a brace of grouse one guinea—viz., at that

* Look at this word "forest"—a curious bit of evidence that the Scottish hills have indeed been disforested; the name has survived, though the trees have disappeared. Facts of nature, or of history, are often found embalmed in language.

rate shooting-lodges are let. But how many times fifty acres kept waste go, so to speak, towards the making of one stag? No deer-forest, in the true sense, "pays," it is sheer luxury. Did we say how many waste acres? Nay, how many lives wasting in the Edinburgh and Glasgow closes go towards the one day's pleasure of the stalker! How the glens have been depopulated—often by cruel force, and even within living memory—to yield room for this sort of forest-making. Yet thousands of families could find their living there, certainly by sheep and cattle rearing, if only the glens were theirs; and without doubt they could here and there by forestry, if those in authority had the wisdom to lead the way. Why, indeed, should the Norwegian mountains yield a wealth of timber, and the Scottish hills but heather and deer? But those in authority seem never to have studied either national economy or national welfare, else they could not let thousands of able-bodied folk—those tramps, called gipsies, descendants, largely, of dispossessed clans-people—go begging about the land,* so that one man may thrive and be thankful. As for the "one man," has he never any visions showing him at what cost he enjoys his hills? How delightful, to be sure, are those "moors," those "forests" with their glorious solitude, their loveliness of nature, their health-giving air—all reserved for a handful of people, while multitudes that should be there are pining their lives away in the hopeless slums. But Cleopatra required to bathe in milk, even if snatched from

* See Appendix.

the mouths of hundreds of starveling babies. She could afford it.

Not only Scotland, but also England, is wasting vast resources in similar manner. Wheat, timber, almost all natural products, are imported now from abroad. Say you, Britain is a manufacturing, a trading country, gathering wealth by trade and allowing all other countries to grow food for her? So she does, starving, as we have seen, her millions because of her trade. I know that the competition of races is keen, and if other races can grow food cheaper, Britain must submit to be fed; but some of these other countries also are in a fair way of manufacturing cheaper, and they may outbid her in the world-market. What pays best in the long-run after all is home-brew for one's own people. How many thousands of acres of land in England are now lying idle, used for fox-hunting only, because the owners, some few of that favoured handful who share the soil of England, seem at their wits' end to use it in a more profitable way. What millions are locked up in that waste soil! Look at the timber only imported from abroad—a hundred thousand tons of pit-props alone every year from France and Norway, thousands of tons of larches every year for fencing alone. Larches grow rapidly, and evidently they pay. Would the foreigner plant them if they did not pay? Yet here is England leaving hundreds of thousands of acres uncultivated, sending hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling, honest coin of the realm, out of the country,* and sending the *labour* out of the country that might feed hundreds of thousands of

* Some eighteen to twenty millions, in fact.

hungry mouths, giving them their own self-earned bread, if this trade-blinded England only could learn a few of the most elementary lessons of national economy.

No ; the friends of the people do not want to become destructive Socialists, but they are not surprised if social democracy seeks an inroad, for the people *are* hungry, and if we will not help them, we must not blame them if sooner or later they will help themselves.

It is plain that none of our handful of landowners are likely to set about re-afforesting waste country ; planting forests is eminently a sowing for the future. We shall all be dead and gone before the full benefits can be reaped ; it is scarcely a work, then, for the individual who has only a life-interest in the land. But a nation—that is another matter ; a nation is proud to set her house in order, working for coming generations. Our grandchildren will reap what we now may sow, and bless or not bless us accordingly.

But there is a very present side to the matter, and not one to be underrated—the all-engrossing question of work for the unemployed. Considering these thousands of acres crying out for labour, is it not a fearfully helpless expedient winter after winter to seek to tide over our would-be and should-be workers by means of charity-doles in our cities ? No ; it is worse than helpless, it is wicked ; it is for ever plunging them back into the mire, out of which they cannot rise save by our lending them the willing hand.

What colonies could not be planted all about the country ? Call them Training Colonies, call them British Workmen's Colonies, call them Homes for the Homeless—

what a blessing they might be, what a gathering up of waste labour, what a saving of land ! And the day would come when England would laugh at the idea that she could not feed her own people. Why, they would feed themselves and pay her back with compound interest.

And surely British trade need not tremble at the prospect ! These people would not only feed themselves, but presently would have money to spend on all sorts of commodities—furniture, clothing, etc.—for themselves and their children. These people would be *wealth-producers*, the produce of their toil naturally flowing back into the country to the benefit of trade. As things now are, your submerged not only are a national grievance, they are a national luxury, and an expensive one ! They may be endowed by the Creator with all manner of latent capacities ; they and their capacities are wasted in the slums. Who in the end is the loser ?

These colonies might be started by the County Councils. They might be started by Government. They might be started by any number of patriotic Englishmen, who love their country better than their own pockets, and who probably would find that their pockets in the end were no great losers. No nation, and no individual, ever yet *has* suffered for performing an act of righteousness. We all know what a force public opinion is ; it broke the negro's chains, despite the vested interest of many an influential Briton, the slave-driving planter in many an instance, and in a very personal sense, too, being merely the representative of British capital. Public opinion, if it can but be roused, *will* break the chains of slumland, despite the landed interest governing the High Court of Parliament to

this day. As some ancient wisdom has it : "The mills of God grind very slowly, but their grinding is sure and true." And thus, depend upon it, even this hard grain—the landed interest—will be ground. God's mill has a hold of it at this very moment—what else is the meaning of these social throes ?

That forestry could provide for a tolerable number of workers is amply proved by the fact that whole country-sides abroad live almost solely by forest-labour, and, let us add, forest ownership, individual ownership, and, what is better still, the joint ownership of a community. This altogether apart from public or crown lands. But forestry is a science, and in Germany a professional class is trained for it, both in and out of college. It is a branch of national economy, an important factor in the "wealth of nations." Germany knows that, and therefore she watches over her forest lands, be they public or private property ; no tree is struck unknown to the *Ober-Förster* (Ranger in Government employ), and she would laugh at the idea that forestry does not pay. It does pay. I have seen a good deal of newspaper writing lately on this question, English woodland owners as a rule declaring, "it does *not* pay." This is because they know only private ownership with its narrow vision. Let them go to Germany—say to Munich University—let them take a practical course with any German *Ober-Förster*, and they will return enlightened British landlords, to be sure, do some planting even now, keeping the ancestral parks in repair—and fine timber some of these contain—or planting game cover ; but there their forestry ceases. Park forestry is a rich man's luxury, and, in itself, a pardonable pride. But true forests, like

rivers, are national things ; the hand of the common-weal alone can turn them to individual gain. One could cite German towns which defray the whole of municipal expenditure out of the proceeds of their forest lands, leaving the citizens free of rates and taxes ; or villages where every man gets his quota of firewood free and often a dividend in cash over and above. Surely even British landlords will admit that this is better than leaving forestry in private hands, where by their own showing it does not pay. If England could learn to husband her forest resources, she could add millions to her revenues by home growth. And how she could employ her unemployed ! Abroad she appears to be more successful, training numbers of students for Indian forestry at Cooper's Hill.*

But to return to our colonies. The idea should not be merely to transplant the slaves ; we must set them free. And this means patiently to work for their freedom, to educate them, to raise them to that level where slum-bred slavery with its consequent degeneration, and British manhood with its crown of true freedom, needs must separate. It will be a difficult task, but it ought not to be beyond the wisdom of a great country.

* Since this was written there appears to have been a waking up in this respect, Scotland actually taking the lead. It would seem that the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society (unsuccessful before in seeking to impress the Minister for Agriculture with the desirability of acquiring a State Model Forest) lately had the satisfaction of seeing some 800 acres—part of Raith Woods—placed under scientific treatment as an object lesson. Referring to this happy innovation, *The Scotsman* says : “The true explanation (*i.e.*, of British failure hitherto) without doubt is to be found in the fact that our woods are all private property”—which words carry double and treble weight from a great newspaper that never yet objected to the landlord system.

Small beginnings have generally the best results ; and thus it will be wisest to transplant a few dozen, a few scores, a few hundreds, to lay the foundations of future village life. There must be a patient selecting of those most fit to be saved. No one urges a random migration of the demoralized street-loafer, whose best chance is that he will rise gradually, the pressure in the strata above him lessening. He is perhaps an object for the "Labour" Colony proper.

But there should not only be Labour Colonies, not merely the thought of work for the unemployed ; there should be the honest and bold confession from the outset that the hope and object is the replanting of rural England with wholesome peasant life. There should be "Own Home" Colonies, at first under guidance, but gradually growing into independent communities. Let the County Councils attempt it ; let a syndicate of patriots try it ; it can be done. And why should not the British Government assist a work of absolute national gain ? Prussia, a few years ago, passed a law to facilitate the acquiring of small holdings. The purchase money is provided by the State. The rent is fixed at the low rate of four per cent. per annum, covering the interest, and forming a sinking-fund which, at the end of sixty years, turns fixity of tenure into freehold. I am told that this provision is eagerly caught at and promises well, both in factory centres and in Prussian *Junker* districts (see footnote, p. 164). It is a wise law in these days of social upheavings, and a kind law, for it seeks to save the country from democracy by saving the home-life of the people.

The cry always is that the small farmer cannot nowadays make a living by the land. But he can if he is

permitted to set about it rightly. The writer remembers taking a walk one day with an English lady through a Black Forest valley, this lady expressing her astonishment "that every little strip of land, even if no larger than one's dining-room table," every odd bit by the wayside, was cultivated, yielding its utmost of harvest value. "How is it," said this lady, "that these Black Foresters are so thrifty? Our people would never think of that!" She could not understand, though the answer was of the simplest: *because the land is theirs*, and if they cultivate even the odd strip, it is for their own reward. What a gainer this country—the nation's commonwealth—would be if folk had the seeing eyes for the strongest of all economic forces—a well-directed self-interest! *Set the soil-tiller free, and he will double the produce of any land.*

But in seeking to replant rural England with village life, stocking her anew with true husbandmen, there is yet another economic force, doubly needed when it is a question of undoing past mischief. We have not got these thrifty people; they are the work of ages. Might one in the meantime try interdependent colonies, each upward striving man resting on the strength of his neighbour? Might co-operation not lead the way?

England *could* grow her own corn, at least a large portion of it; but even supposing, while present circumstances last, that wheat must be imported from other countries, what about cow-keeping? Is there any reason why English cities should not look for all dairy produce to England's own people? Cow-keeping is essentially the small owner's business. There has been some writing lately proposing dairy-farming for gentle hands, even "unemployed" ladies;

but though ladies could make butter, dairy-farming cannot be divorced from the land, and England's one hope for curing her agricultural depression consists in getting a better money's worth than at present out of the land by letting in a soil-tilling people! Now some thirty million sterling a year, which might largely be kept in this country, goes to France and Denmark. Look at Denmark and her flourishing dairies, owned by a number of small farmers, combining for strength; and they apparently find it a paying thing.

And not in Denmark alone. In the Black Forest one day I came across such a co-operative dairy in a village close to where I was staying. It simply meant that all the villagers had combined for starting a machine-worked dairy. They, each and all, hand in their milk, some more, some less—for co-operation need not mean equality of ownership—each getting back from this centre of mutual wealth his corresponding share of butter. And they find it pays, for their butter is noted all round the district. By combining they can work scientifically; they can work by strict rules of national economy, each man being the better for his neighbour's improved condition. Why should not some such arrangement be possible here also? Even a poor woman, who barely has any land, can with advantage keep a cow in such a village. One sees many humble villagers out on summer evenings in these places, women-folk mostly, cutting the grass along the hedges and ditches, and carrying home on their backs a day's fodder for the cow. Hard work this! Yes; for a village has its poor, but they are rarely paupers. What waggon loads of grass—good fodder—are wasted in Britain,

both in and outside the squire's "preserves," absolutely wasted !

Yet there is more than cow-keeping. There is poultry-keeping—think of the millions of eggs imported—there is pig-fattening ; there is market gardening. There are bees, rabbits—quite a number of things to which the small owner will turn his ingenuity, if only you will let him be owner, this factor of a wholesome self-interest being absolutely necessary. Those who understand these things assure me that the six-acre farm would be the most promising thing, for the simple reason that it can be worked by a man with his own family, and by the spade ; hand-labour, *i.e.*, deep-digging (intensive agriculture), yielding double or more than machine-worked fields. But I cannot forego recording here what might well move the envy of this country.

In the neighbourhood of Bielefeld, in the province of Westphalia, and within an afternoon's walk of the "Colony of Mercy," one day last autumn I came upon a peasant holding, an almost patriarchal farm, which has descended from father to son for upwards of a thousand years. That peasant's name, and family, and ownership of that particular farm can be traced in the archives of Bielefeld to the days of Wittekind. And even as this old Saxon hero, the compeer of Charlemagne, was followed to the grave by his caparisoned but riderless horse, so is this peasant, many of the old Saxon customs surviving in that country-side, which, somehow, like an island in a turbulent sea, was almost the only spot in Germany not touched by the thirty years' war ; and so the line of descent and ownership has never been broken.

A family property, surely ; yet the owner is nothing but

a peasant, and proud to be one—a peasant rising at three on a summer morning to see to his own fields, his wife rising at the same time to attend to her dairy. Naturally such people prosper. This man is lord of all he surveys, of the fields stretching away to the hill-chain, and of a couple of hills, too, well wooded and yielding their timber; yet he is but a peasant. Of course, he needs labourers, but his very labourers are small owners on his farm, holding their bits of land from which he cannot oust them, in perpetual lease, as we should call it. These lesser peasants in that part of the country are called “hirelings” (they actually have the word, being Saxons, though spelling it *heuerling*, the diphthong pronounced *oi*), the “hireling” giving the larger peasant, instead of rent, a certain amount of labour at seed-time and harvest-time and thrashing time, being free otherwise to work on his own little farm. And some of these “hirelings” have been in their homesteads for generations. What a manhood is grown under such conditions! Yet that man of a thousand years is nothing but a soil-tilling peasant.

The rights of inheritance are strictly guarded in that country; only one member of a family can succeed to the land, but the others are provided for. Though but peasants, and proud of it, there is no reason why a son should not enter the Church or any other profession; education can be had in Germany, and even a peasant can educate his boys. Isn't their “blood” of the soundest—country-fed, country-bred boys with a pride all their own, with qualities ingrained by a thousand years of industry, aye, of soil tilling, the contact with mother earth, even as the Grecian fable told, ever yielding the truest men?

Nor is that man an isolated specimen of his country ; that Ravensberger land within the province of Westphalia is fairly stocked with them—a peasantry for a poet's dream. Not that they are angels in smock frocks ; they have their own faults and shortcomings, even, maybe, an intense pride ; but what they are for sterling manhood, for Christian possibilities, may be seen in the "Colony of Mercy" near Bielefeld, that unequalled creation of Christian genius having struck its roots in just such peasant soil.

I have purposely kept to the appellation "peasant" in its true sense—a freehold tiller of the soil, the wealth-producing substratum of the nation. In that particular part of Germany the larger peasant-owner is called "*Meier*" ; but everywhere else in Germany the word "*Bauer*" holds, even as "*paysan*" does in France. I know of "peasants" in the south, in that favoured little country of Baden for instance, who are worth their million of marks, owning forest-land, and vineyards, and spreading fields. Yet they are just "peasants," dressing and living, and above all working as peasants ; and the Government of that little country well knows how to appreciate them. In this country a whole class of freehold self-tilling proprietors has been absorbed by a non-tilling landlord class ; and this evidently is the reason why England is complaining that she cannot feed her own people. The very name of "peasant" has in consequence received a different meaning, calling up nothing to the British mind in these days but an enslaved hind, a poverty-stricken labourer ; but the loss is really a national one. Such large peasant proprietors, of course, are the minority, the real strength of the country

being the thousands of lesser freehold soil-tillers, each "*Bauer*" on his own little farm.

Such a peasantry cannot, indeed, be manufactured ; they are the patient work of a wholesome national development, forming the sure basis of a country's true wealth. It is well known that the upper classes are ever being nourished from the strata below them. Do not families decay when they have reached the top of the ladder ? It is so by God's own economy, whether we like it or not. There is no individualism, but only solidarity, in the broad history of the human race. Are we then, as a class, such a degenerate lot—we, the so-called Upper Ten—decayed physically, and aye, morally, because we have so badly husbanded the soil on which our own humanity needs must stand ? Degeneration of the masses has a trick of striking the classes.

So it will indeed be for our own sakes if we endeavour to be more just to the people.

And though we cannot manufacture we can prepare the way. We can give them a health-creating environment, and health means wealth for body and soul. We *can* take them back to the land. As for funds, surely the money is nothing if only the idea will strike root. We do not feel the loss of a million in this country if it goes to the bottom of the sea in a foundering ironclad, and what could not be done with a million in the way of saving the people—a million which would be repaid again and again in a hundred tangible blessings ? Think of the South African war cost ! Nearly two millions weekly ! Would to God we had spent it on home needs. But are there not nearly a hundred and fifty millions deposited in the

Post Office Savings Bank made up chiefly of the pence and shillings of the working classes? And what does this prove? *That even the working classes, out of their own pockets, could provide the means,* if only the public countenance were given—the honest desire of those in authority and power—to create the credit needed. For the upper stratum of the British “masses” are stout-hearted people, they would glory in this sort of democracy.

At present our political economy is somewhat astray. In plain language it connives at the people's ruin, and then some of us are busily engaged in alms-begging, in alms-giving too, on behalf of the victims. I have heard a wonderfully true remark somewhere to the effect that Dr. Barnardo and all such philanthropic men tell us that sixteen pounds will keep one waif for a year. But the rent-value of a six-acre farm under a patriotic syndicate need not be more! And from such a farm a man could feed and clothe himself, his wife and children, *and a waif to boot!* Should we not, then, assist such a man? At present he and his can only inflict waifs on the nation.

What more need be said? Shall we leave the people to starve and degenerate in the overcrowded slums? It is curious how fertile folk are in finding reasons why the people themselves are unwilling to leave the great cities; “they find the country so dull,” one is told; “it is their own love of excitement which keeps them in London, in Liverpool, in Glasgow!” How quick we are to consult the feelings of the poor when they happen to coincide with our own real or imaginary interest! They find the country dull, do they? that “country” in which we have never allowed them more than the six feet by two to be buried in?

Moreover, what is it that has come to be designated as "country?" This ill-husbanded realm of England lying idle—vast stretches of it—for the pleasures of the hunting-field; or, at best, green wildernesses with some forlorn cattle here and there; these stretches of "dulness"—except, of course, for sweet nature's beauty—broken only by fine ancestral parks, those stately homes of England, of which Mrs. Hemans sings, "How beautiful they stand!" Beautiful, indeed! and, to be sure, Mrs. Hemans in her succeeding stanza has to say something also about the happy cottage homes of England, but that is the poet's vision. Where are they, excepting the cottages dependent on those stately parks—if they are happy? Is this a sweeping assertion? Yet one can go through miles and miles of country and never see anything else; the British landlord class has done away with true village life. To be sure, the Parish Councils, and a kind landowner here and there, by means of allotments, are beginning somewhat to mend matters, but that is a long way yet from an independent and well-established peasantry.

"Done away with true village life!" Let this be rightly understood; the fact is, folk in this country scarcely know what "true village life" might mean! Of course, there are villages in this country, and pretty villages, too, here and there, but examine them, and you will find this: The villagers for the most part are but labourers working for Squire Goodgrace or Farmer Jones, their cottages, at a week's or fortnight's notice, belonging to the landed proprietor of the neighbourhood. What do you expect that this sort of arrangement does for the people in the way of creating a true manhood, a race proud of their hardy

toil and bound to their village by their own family history and a sense of community ? It is only in rural England it ever can happen that villagers are served with notice to quit. We had a typical case arousing some public interest the other day ; honest, hard-working folk turned out of their cottages because they voted in matters of Parish or County Council to the displeasure of the landlord—a country practitioner in the North about the same time losing his house, and, consequently, his practice, for a similar reason—this being a free country ! And it is only in the British Isles that a cottager, if he farm some bit of land, dare not think of improvements by the sweat of his brow, because it would only mean an “improvement” of rent, leaving him, if his harvest should fail, worse off in the end ! What can an arrangement like this do for the well-being of the people—indeed, for the well-being of the country !

As to the people not finding the country interesting, leaving it by shoals for the great cities, if we gave them a feeling of *own-ness* there, they would find it interesting enough ! Look at villages abroad, and what a life they yield. Why, there are scores of story-writers, of novelists even, and of poets, never going for material outside village life ; is not this a proof, ample and undeniable, that village life *as it ought to be* has charms and delights enough to satisfy any people—and satisfying them ? What visions one has of games and songs under the village linden on a summer evening or a Sunday afternoon ; what visions of young men and maidens strolling about the home-fields—those flaxen-haired, health-blooming maidens, with their coy little caps half-

hiding a wealth of hair, as lovely in the sight of village swains, surely, as any pale London girl in the eyes of her slum-bred lover; what visions of older folk, sitting before their cottage doors, the humming bees of their own garden about them, talking of their harvest-fields—theirs—and of the hundred and one things filling their life! And for mere amusement, have they not their fairs, their dances, more sometimes than is good for them? Have they not their patriotism, too? for the older men have been through the great war; the younger men, at any rate, have had their turn of service in the army, which, whatever may be said against it, has this for it, that it cultivates a sense of patriotism among the people. Just listen to those unsophisticated villagers singing the songs of the Fatherland that may any day call upon them to shed their blood in its defence; hearken to their singing, as if they loved their country! Where is the British slum-dweller who loves his country, since true love of one's country can only be grown in love of home? He scarcely knows there is such a thing as "his country"; he knows there are luckier folk, and folk in authority—"them swells" and the "perlice"; but that there is a country that owes him duty, a country he might cling to, he has never heard. And if you have let the green country grow dull to even the better class working people, whose fault is it? Had we not better try and re-create some sort of a country—a people's own—a country they can love, a country they can sing about, not patriotic war-songs necessarily, but songs echoing peace and plenty, and family life and happiness for young and old? And since we are proud of our culture, cannot we lay

the basis of even an educated village life, healthily developed, of course, and nature-bred, just to help the people to find their own humanity? These wretched slum-dwellers, how happy we could make them, some of them, if, rising above ourselves, we were to set about freeing the country of that blight of dulness now resting upon it! How those green wildernesses would break into songs of joy!

But the real meaning of "true village life" is this; those villages abroad to which one's vision turns, in the truest and completest sense, are communities. The villagers are freeholders—every peasant in his own house, in which his father and grandfather, and forbears beyond, have lived and died. He is surrounded by his own fields, his orchards, his meadows; and if he be a poor man, he yet has enough of his own to be a man like the rest. And then the German word for parish is *Gemeinde*, i.e., a body of men having things in common—a *community*. They not seldom have land in common over and above their own freeholds—some hillside, some forest, maybe; and they have interests in common; the village is *theirs*. They have their own Mayor, who is one of themselves, thus having their own village government, a sort of home rule, in fact—at any rate for village affairs—under Government, of course. It is not so hard, then, in such a village to grow self-respect, thrift, or any other manly virtue—love of home, love of their own soil, above all things.

They have their own Justice, too, not, indeed, of their own making, but provided for them. They can get "law" if they need it, at no great distance either, and at no great expense, every countryside with its villages having its

"County Court," where the poorest villager has direct access, if he need it. To be sure, this has its reverse—a wholesome authority over rich and poor! Now what redress has a cottager or tenant-farmer here—some magistrate? Yet what is a rural magistrate in this country, if not a landlord or landlord's cousin? Justice should never be vested in a private class, if the welfare of the nation is the main object.

These villagers, then, have a truly developed village life; they are a community of men with their own interests, their own joys, their own hardships, maybe, but not beholden for either of these to their betters. They may trap a hare, too, or other game on their own fields; nor need they stand by helplessly seeing the county fox-hunt destroy their growing grain. They would not tolerate a fox, their hens, ducks, and geese being gain-yielding property. To be sure there is "compensation" in Britain; but compensation for damage is one thing, and the poor man's right is another. Such peasantry are an important and valued part of the nation's commonwealth, and the country, being the richer for their industry, their thrift and stout-heartedness, knows what it owes them! These hints will perhaps suffice to give a meaning to the expression "true village life."

No one will be so foolish as to imagine that Germany, or any other country, having true village life, is therefore socially perfect;* nor is such village life perfect, since *man*

* In certain parts of the empire, in Eastern Prussia for instance, there indeed survives a system of land tenure, a remnant of the middle ages, somewhat akin to British landlordism, with the simple result that matters there are about as bad as in Britain. I give this as a proof for the correctness of this book's arguments in pointing

nowhere is perfect, but the above nevertheless is a true description. Germany has her own social question, and requires to solve it—her own share of homelessness too; but the social question here is a more appalling thing than anywhere abroad, the slum-life of Britain being a development of her own. And things are so much worse here, just because one cannot probe the sore problem in any direction without coming upon the one great underlying trouble—the homelessness of the masses; in other words, the land question! If England would take this all-overshadowing question in hand, solving it fairly and soberly, striving to be just all round, the rest of her social problems, as it were, would fall into rank, being solved in consequence.

There is yet an objection the ignorant or half-knowing will make, viz., that small holdings would end in a subdivision of land so minute that it must mean the starvation of all. This is merely a theory. Examine any of these villages abroad, and you will find that by some course of nature the village balance of possession always rights itself. Of course, as a rule, only one in a family succeeds to a farm, but others may be provided for by marriage; others, again, have had a training—one may become a

out the great estates as the paramount source of agricultural failure, not to mention a neglected people, wherever they are found. But Eastern Prussia, whatever wretchedness it harbours, either as regards its "Junkers" or its cottagers, is but a lesser part of the Fatherland, and, it is to be hoped, one that will be swept clean presently. Its soil-tillers have been rapidly leaving it, and the "Junkers" cannot work the land any more than British landlords can. The above picture of peasant life can be verified in Middle and South Germany, and certainly in Prussia, West of Berlin. A new law, too, has come into operation in Prussia seeking to settle labourers on their own soil. (See p. 152).

schoolmaster, another take up a trade, another may even aspire to the ministry ; and if there is an unlucky one among them, it is he who goes to America. There is emigration from Germany, of course, some countrysides being overstocked, others impoverished by poor soil, or more likely through Jewish money-lenders, the Jew wherever he has a chance being the blight of the German peasant. Village life then, if self-supporting, is not altogether self-contained ; and it is no secret that a true peasantry is the most trustworthy substratum of the national edifice. Let those, therefore, that would benefit this British country set to work in the foundations. A truly developed village life, indeed, means a developing humanity, and the rest will take care of itself. There is many a city family abroad, educated, prosperous, refined, the grandfather or great-grandfather of which was some village boy ; and well for such family that he was, for it is a wholesome sort of ancestry, and in keeping somehow with God's own arrangement, the human race being a tree with roots and stem and branches ; and there is no individualism, but only solidarity in the larger history of the race. It cannot be repeated too often that it would be to our own advantage as the "classes" if we strove to better the "masses." It is not at bottom a question of charity, not even of mere justice to the people ; it is a matter of national economy, a matter of national gain !

It is well to keep the larger views before one.

Replanting rural England with wholesome village life, then, is possible, if you will only make a move towards that simple solution of employing waste labour for the saving of waste land. What a different aspect the face of the

country would bear from that which is seen now ! Now you can run through miles of land on certain railway lines with never a cottage in sight, as though the Black Death had swept the realm.

There is a pathetic account in Dr. Paton's biography, when, coming home from the New Hebrides, that British hero of the mission field found a whole countryside where his father's homestead once stood, and other homesteads, with their history of brave human lives, levelled to the ground. He could trace the green spot of his childhood's love, his childhood's religion, but not a vestige of the village proper ; or, rather, four or five solitary cottages only, where, for very shame, a few aged people were permitted to die a natural death, when their plots and cottages also would be swept into the jaws of greed. He found the village smithy surviving, but its sparks few and fading ; he found the meal mill still grinding away, but nothing like what it did when every villager bought or cultivated his few acres of corn, and every crofter and farmer in the parish sent his grist to the mill. The grocer's shop still recalled the well-known name, but so few are the mouths now to be fed that his warm-hearted wife is retiring from it in disgust, declaring that "*these landlords and their big farms hae driven our folks a' awa', and spoiled the schule, and the shop, the kirk, and the mill.*" And verily the school is robbed of its children, and the parish church of its worshippers !
 . . . "Of ten thousand homes in Scotland," he says, "once sweet and beautiful, each a little possible paradise in its own well-cultivated plot, this is true to-day ; and where are the healthy, happy peasant boys and girls that such homes bred and reared ? They are sweltering and

struggling for existence in our towns and cities." No wonder even that most unworldly of self-denying missionaries adds: "I have heard with a grim satisfaction that this system of large farming* which extinguishes our village homes, and sends our peasantry to rear their children in attics and cellars of populous towns, was proving ruinous at length to the landlords and factors who had in many cases cruelly forced it upon an unwilling people for mere selfish gain . . . *for the loss of the nation as a whole is vital, if not irreparable.*"

This being true of England also.

Yet it is not too late to stem the ruin; and so little is wanted to solve this grave social question—only a little patient working, a little patient guiding, a confession above all that we have wronged them, and the people will save themselves. What they want is *fair play*, and not charity. We have shut the country upon them; we have but to open the door and let them go back. It is a work for the Parliament of this nation. Let the people learn to use their votes aright.

Still, some sort of an atonement from the upper classes

* More correctly, "large possession," for heaven knows what can justly be said for the "large farming" of the big estates in Scotland or in England either. True, some tenant-farmers imitate the landlord in swallowing up their smaller neighbours—the "laying of field to field," known as "improving an estate." I know a Highland farm on which a generation ago there were a dozen families—all humble, all content; now it is one farm, because one moneyed tenant offering higher rent to the landlord has managed to squeeze out, one after another, his poorer neighbours. No wonder there are ruined cottages—you find them wherever you turn in the Highlands, mute, staring ruins; and looking through the broken window you may see remnants of furniture even, a battered bedstead, a

were a noble thing—it were a promising thing—proving that some true mettle is left in the ranks of those who have been the oppressing class for centuries. It is to the few noble ones, the few truly generous ones, this book ventures to appeal. The work would be so much easier if they came forward, if they gave up some land with a good grace, and of their own free will. If only they gave it to a People's Loan Fund at, say, three per cent.—gave it with the distinct understanding it was to be employed for Own-Home Colonies. That would be something. There is much land in wealthy ownership which does not pay three per cent.—nothing like it—being heather-land maybe for fox hunting, or green wildernesses enclosing some fine mansion. And “We shouldn't like the people's cottages right up to our park-gates, you know,” said a candid person the other day who has a fine house in the country. No; we like to be “alone in the earth.”

In a sense national Christianity and patriotism are one, and the position we take towards the social problems may be a touch-stone of our Christianity. Let those who love their country consider if they can do a nobler, even a more Christ-like, thing than make homes for the people—an Own

chair, a table, the people having gone away probably just in the clothes they wore, when their measure of starvation was full. But this was a case mostly of turf dwellings, which pulled down and scattered over the fields make a rich top dressing—manure, in fact! What species of government, save landlord rule, is equal to this: getting rid of labouring hands and turning homes into top-dressing! What became of the poor folk and their children, who cared? who inquired? What appeal had they, what law in the land to protect them from the greed of their “betters”? The industry of such squeezed-out families is lost to the soil; is it wonder the glens are barren?

Home, a clean home, where the world-saving spirit of God shall have a fair chance with them ? Cleanliness is next to godliness, and that terrible one room is hell's antechamber, be sure of it. Yet the hard-used slum-dwellers may be nearer heaven than some of us who deny them a man's "room" (*i.e.*, right) "to live."

Going from Edinburgh to Glasgow one goes through a green expanse, void of humanity, void almost of cottages, with never a village in sight ; yet this unpeopled land connects two busy cities. It is an eyesore every time one passes. Half the slum-dwellers of either city ought to be in happy homes out yonder. I know similar stretches in Germany, in France, and elsewhere where the train carries you through what looks like one uninterrupted flow of village life with fair fields, with cattle—the people's own. What prevents it here ? Surely that green desert might be peopled, ringing with children's laughter, with the sounds of husbandry, bringing health and wealth to the nation ? And what a blessing to these cities ! The same may be said of a wide girdle of sparsely populated and, to a great extent, uncultivated land round London. If nothing else were achieved by such an exodus than bestowing upon the people the "blue ribbon" called blue sky, its blessings could not be overrated. Half the temperance societies might be dispensed with then ; temperance would be nature-bred. What a step forward this would be in the moral history of the country, and how coming generations would bless us for the kindly wisdom assisting a swelling tide—even the turbulent waters of Socialism—to set in in a right direction.

There is something pitifully helpless in the way in which

this recurring problem of the unemployed, or partially employed, is faced.

During the last great frost a London vestryman actually wrote to the papers, asking, "How is a vestry to find work when such bitter weather has a grip of the land?" How, indeed! If these people were out in village homes of their own they could smile at the frost; they could sit still waiting upon Nature, the summer's husbandry would keep them. There might not be much ready money in the till, but there would be a fair heap of potatoes; there would be a sufficiency of oats or other grain; there would be a cow or two; a fattened pig, maybe—none need fear the winter. The "unemployed" are a modern development, and, in the extent known here, a British peculiarity; they are the natural result of a mistaken system. How do villagers manage in other countries, where winters are longer and more severe than ever experienced in England? They sit still, yet no one calls them "unemployed." There is always some work to be done even about a wintry farm, and in the long "forenights" they gather in each other's houses, the wives carrying their spinning-wheels, the men their pipes, or, if so inclined, some wood-carving or similar light industry; there is a happy evening of story-telling, of singing, of bashful love-making. Why, these evenings of the out-of-work season make half the poetry of village life! They are the social bond, too, among the villagers; and maybe the village pastor will drop in, not to give a sermon, but to listen to their tales, and to get to know the simple humanity of his people. Such things, no doubt, are writ in British chronicles of the past. It is because Britain has quite lost sight of what might be that she is

so slow in seeing the only true remedy for her social trouble.

Britain is proud of her wealth, yet a country's true riches can never be in her money-bags ; a nation's riches are in a race of stalwart and sober sons, like the yeomanry of old ; but British Hearts of Oak were never raised in a city slum.

V.

THE CANKERWORM IN OURSELVES.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."

—*The Sermon on the Mount.*

WHAT can we do, we who are not landowners, to remedy the vast homelessness of the people?

A Quaker was once reasoning with a friend concerning some humanitarian efforts, pointing to the causes of evil and to the possibility of redress. "I don't see," the friend kept saying, till the Quaker almost lost patience, and taking his fellow by the arm, led him to the window. "Dost thou see this landscape?" "Yes, of course," the other replied, "and a fine expanse it is!" "Dost see it quite so well now?" holding up a sovereign in the other's line of sight. "No," the friend said, "of course not!" "Of course not," echoed the Quaker.

It is thus the golden sovereign hinders many a man's vision.

It is strange how dense and slow of comprehension some people are, even good people, when one reasons with them about the absolute need of seeking a healing for the sores of the people, the absolute necessity, both in an economic and political sense, of endeavouring to break the fetters, and sweep away some of the miseries which are comprised, nay, rooted, in that one overpowering evil, the

"Homelessness of the people." The fact is, *the self-interest of the Upper Classes is in the way*; and not only of the few very wealthy, but of the whole gradation of the possessing class. We all are more or less concerned when it is a question of lifting the dead-weight of oppression under which the poor struggle in vain. More or less, we all are in bond to mammon. The prince of this world walks in many a subtle guise, and some things which go by very fair names indeed are at bottom just mammon rule. The whole superstructure of modern civilization is really the outcome of the struggle for wealth; explain it, extenuate it as you like, if it were not for the power of the golden sovereign in the world, all the other evils we are deploring would at a stroke disappear. We are always wanting to possess, to collect, to store—for what? Life is but short, and God will say, "*Thou fool*—whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" One would scarcely believe that the Creator of all things, the patient, pitiful Father, could use such an expression towards the creature of His making—*Thou fool!*—but Christ says He will. Yet we *are* fooled, the devil, mammon, by this one golden leading-string, holding sway in the world, dragging souls to hell.

I want to show how it is we all are concerned in making some inquiry into the cruel oppression weighing down the people.

An acquaintance of the writer's one day had a few hundred pounds to invest, indeed, being but a working-woman herself, it was the first time she ever was blessed or troubled with wanting to invest, and was as ignorant accordingly as a baby. An experienced friend came to the rescue,

investing for her in what were then known as "Old Turks," a safe and comfortable stock, a five per cent. one, proving even a better thing to that investor, for she bought in soon after the bombardment of Alexandria, when Eastern stocks ran low. The "Old Turks" have been at par and over for a long time, but just then they stood at about sixty-five, thus yielding a clear seven and a-half per cent., with almost perfect security—indeed, one might strike out the "almost," for unless both the English and French Governments were to play utterly false, these "Old Turks" must stand, both the Western Powers having guaranteed further Turkish loans since, the "Old Turks" holding preference. One did not really understand; one always thought Turkey rather a rotten Power, but this investor found out presently that her "Old Turks" were so prompt in their dividends, seven and a-half per cent. to her, because these dividends were provided for by the Egyptian tribute. So far so good. But after a while she made the further discovery that this Egyptian tribute was raised by taxes on the Fellaheen, and she came to read about the heavy burden borne by the Fellah; how his bit of land, his cottage, his harvest, his everything was taxed and taxed again to find that tribute; how he was for ever struggling and never getting out of the mire, yet ever paying, being forced to pay with no end of cruel oppression. I forget how she heard about it; it was, I think, one of the things General Gordon denounced; but she finally came to understand that the "Egyptian tribute" meant nothing else but the bitter tears and groans of an enslaved population. That tribute, in short, was nothing but a sucking of the blood of the Fellaheen, the Egyptian peasantry. Any pleasure in that

snug investment after this had a sting in it. What one heard about the miserable Fellaheen was not pleasant, and one did not like the discovery that, in lending to the Turk, one was really backing a slave-holding people; it was nice to get seven and a-half per cent., but somehow that investor did not feel her hands clean till she had sold out of these comfortable "Turks." The broker thought her an idiot, and in fact the money has never since brought anything like that interest.

I am telling this little experience by way of illustration; that investor was not a slave-holder, and she declares that, to her knowledge, she has never oppressed mortal man, nor been hard on anyone who worked for her; yet here, by means of her few hundred pounds, invested as they were, she, in the person of these Eastern Governments, was a slave-trader and an oppressor of the Fella, deriving gain wet with the tears and stained with the blood of God knows what poor creatures.

This is how it is, and how, somehow, in the ways of our investments, in the ways even of so-called legitimate business, nay, in the very relationships and interchanges of life, we are all more or less drawing gain to which cling the tears, the life-blood—aye, the *lost souls*, the crimes, the misery, the wretchedness—of these terrible slums.

Yes, let this thought go home to every decent conscience among us, that the ease, the refinement, the more or less "goodness" even of the favoured classes, in short, that the environment that makes us, has struck its roots—its *suckers* I had almost said—in the miserable lives, in the sin and perdition, of our drawers of water and hewers of wood. It is not too much to say that these

burden bearers of ours, through the forces of circumstance, are in danger of hell, so that some of us might have our chance of heaven! Ruskin says somewhere, the sweet creature we call "lady" is the product of thousands of hard-handed, hard-visaged working women. The man of culture, even the Christian in a sense, is a similar product. What a fearful responsibility is ours!

It was comparatively easy for that investor, and not particularly praiseworthy, to sell her few "Old Turks" and thus wash her hands of Fellah oppression and other Eastern meanness. It was only a few hundreds, and a question of ten or fifteen pounds of one's little income to one who has never been tempted to live by investments, but rather by simple work—it wasn't so very much of goodness. I sometimes wonder what she would have done had she belonged to the favoured few who live on their dividends; if instead of a few hundreds there had been a goodly number of thousands snugly put by in these "Old Turks." It is there we meet temptation. And thus in a hundred ways, known or unknown, we are really all of us more or less engaged in oppressing others. We live by the sweat of the poor. I have learned this by these "Old Turks."

The roots of avariciousness are deep in our hearts. Christ would not have had so much to say against mammon if it were not so. There is scarcely a sin that has such a hold on humanity as this love of money, and it must be so because of its many guises, even of its sometimes apparently innocent, or at least quite legitimate, face. Christ never said a hard word to any Magdalene, not that He condoned the sin, but He *has* said hard things against mammon. Maybe it was because He knew the amount of

self-righteousness, of respectability, that can go along with it ; maybe, He foresaw that this sin more than any other would hinder the true growth of His kingdom. It is only the choice few who ever really get quite clear of mammon. Gordon did, by way of an example ; but, then, he was called "mad" by many. When he went to the Soudan, on what proved his death-errand, the English authorities, to equip their Governor-General, offered him two thousand pounds. "Oh, no," said he, "two hundred will do." And "*Who is this man,*" said the Emperor of China, on a previous occasion, almost aghast, "*who will not take money*"—money offered as a compliment, not as a bribe—"who is this man ?" It is only a few souls who ever get so far, and the world, even the Christian world, says of such a one : "But, you know, he is not a man of business."

It stands to reason that the world should love money ; it would not be the world if it did not. But Christian folk were told of old to be *in* the world, but not *of* it. Now, it is a strange fact—I venture to call attention to it, for it is passing strange—that *in no European country are there so many wealthy Christians found as in this country*. You but rarely find abroad that great wealth and a Christian profession go together ; they do here ; they do even admirably ! Now, how is this ? Money-making is eminently a worldly virtue. If a Christian makes money, it is surely not because of his Christianity, but rather despite it. I know that "the Lord blessed Abraham in all things," but that is not the point now. The question is, Can a Christian make money, a large fortune, with perfectly clean hands—hands that Christ would call clean ? I do not venture to say, for I know that Christians here do make money—make it even

largely. I put the question to Christian consciences. But the fact keeps coming back to me how strangely in this country keen money-making and great fortunes go very smoothly along with much Christian profession. How is it? How is it? Is it that mammon has a hold even of the Churches here? Let Christians tell me, for it seems past finding out.

Surely the true Christian cannot make a pursuit of money-making, the money would never stick to him. The two things are at different poles. The true Christian sits easy to the things of this world. He and they have nothing in common; he is altogether above or outside them; he has no taste, no talent, no capacity in that direction; and it really is a mystery how Christians—whom Christ would call His “own”—can die, leaving vast fortunes behind them. “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth”; “love not the things that are in the world”; “for ye cannot serve God and mammon”; and “they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare.” If a so-called Christian, who reads his Bible but rarely, somehow forgets these precepts, one can understand that; but if he makes a point of having it always near him, reading morning and evening prayers to his household, one does not quite see how he can get past such admonitions.

No doubt it is pleasant to have plenty of money; one may do much good with it; and it is not, of course, in itself wrong to be rich; but the point now is: what sort of worldliness and what kind of spirituality must amalgamate in a man to make it possible that he, a Christian, be also a prosperous money-maker? Will Christian folk try to answer this question? Try to explain how it is that in

Britain, more often than anywhere in Europe, great wealth, often self-made wealth, and an earnest Christian profession may go hand in hand ? It is passing strange ; *and this country has the most wretched slum-life in civilized Europe !*

I once spoke to a flourishing man of business, a wealthy man, and also a good man. I was told he went down every Sunday into the slums to hold Bible readings. I wanted his advice regarding some thoughts of how to better the poor, but somehow we talked at cross purposes, and, like the Quaker above mentioned, he kept saying, "I don't see." He told me I was all wrong in many of my reasonings ; the people really were gainers by that system which collected vast lands and vast fortunes in a few hands. Trade was against the people's living by the land ; they could never use it as the great owner did, and his wealth came round to them in many benefits. Here I did not "see," and therefore stuck to my point that the only radical cure for many patent ills was to get the people, a proportion of them, out of the slums back to the land. And in the heat of argument a remark escaped me. I said I had been reading of a certain physician heading a slum report with these words : "If I were to seek to elevate the masses, I would first seek to elevate the landlords"—*elevate*, that is, *convert* them, I said. And my poor friend crimsoned, trembling from head to foot. "I trust," he gasped, with quivering lips, "I trust I am converted. I have been a Christian this many a year, and I am one of the largest landlords in this city !" Now, I had not known that, or my remark would not have been made—at least, not so bluntly. But it had struck home. One might as well ask a man holding brewery shares to assist in any

movement for closing public-houses, as ask one, even if he be a Christian, who holds city property to help you in seeking to dispossess the devil of the slums. Like that Quaker, he doesn't see — actually does not — the golden sovereign closing up his line of vision. And yet that landlord is a good man, toiling on a Sunday for the spiritual welfare of those groaning slums. If this should meet his eye, and I hope it may, will he kindly observe that I have not in any way compromised him ; and will he for his own honourable sake take a little Bible reading to himself, how Christ once said, and to a good young man, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast and give to the poor"—"*if thou wilt be perfect !*" It is not in itself wrong to hold slum property, drawing interest therefrom, but there is something better ; and the selling alone would not mend matters, for it would only put in another landlord.

Another good man told me upon another occasion how I was utterly mistaken in saying that slum property was rented three or four times as heavily as West End property. "I ought to know," he said, "for I am an owner of slum property, and it does not pay me more than at best three and a-half per cent., which no one can call usury." Of course, I believed him, and felt silenced ; and yet I was sure the oft-told tale of slum oppression by wealth-gathering landlords could not be a myth. It was only after a while I saw the possible explanation ; let me illustrate it. An acquaintance of mine, a director of a certain insurance company, once told me : "Our shares, and we consider them perfectly safe, now pay twelve per cent. interest." "Then you would recommend them to your friends," I replied. "Ah !" said he, "but you cannot buy

in quite so snugly now; they are ten-pound shares, but they now stand at a heavy premium; you cannot get them at less than twenty-five now"; this plainly bringing down the grand interest to present buyers to about four and a-half per cent. Nevertheless, it is true that the original capital invested in that company (its changing hands again and again being nothing to the point) yields twelve per cent.

And so it is with slum property. That slum-lord, who could no doubt honestly say that his money in that particular instance only yielded him three and a-half per cent., did not himself build that slum, he had bought it; if so, he will have bought it at market value, which is always regulated by current affairs; or, more likely, for no one would choose bad times for buying, he may have inherited it, when again it will have passed into his hands at a valuation in accordance with the market value of the day. To him it may be a three and a-half per cent. investment, and yet it is true that in proportion to the actual capital sunk in that property, the poor are burdened with a shocking rate of interest. The poor people have to pay a rental out of all proportion, as compared with the stateliest dwellings of the wealthy. And most slum property *does* yield returns which can only be called usurious. When it comes to poor folk paying five or seven, nay, often ten pounds, a year for a walled-in space of air scarcely larger than a comfortable West-End-er's bathroom, surely the word "usury" is not too strong. In certain localities in London the one-room rent rises to fifteen, and even twenty, pounds.

It is here where house-jobbing comes in. You buy a slum, raise the poor folks' rents, and then sell it again at an improved valuation. Some of these slums are thus

continually changing hands, their fictitious value ever increasing, the extortionate rent, with apparent innocence, representing a quite legitimate return on any holder's outlay. An example has just come to my knowledge—it is painful to learn *what* folk, along with the barefaced sweater, are found indulging in this iniquitous oppression of the poor.

But I have satisfied myself that twelve to fifteen per cent. on the capital involved is no unusual thing. Some landlords in their secret hearts not unlikely know of twenty per cent., their actually clearing this depending on their capacity to extort the uttermost farthing, or prevent “moonlight flittings.” In some cases, even in well-managed properties, it simply comes to this, that the honest poor have to pay what amounts to such heavy usury to make up for the “bad debts”—*i.e.*, those tenants who give the landlord the slip. The landlord in such cases plainly can put on quite a righteous face, declaring truthfully he considers himself lucky if he clears any reasonable return. And yet there is usury! And yet there is oppression! I know of a block of tenements—no matter in what city—owned by a capitalist who set to work to “improve the dwellings of the poor.” He had the whole of that block gutted (the outer walls being of that stout last-century kind not put up now), entirely rebuilding the interior; and yet with all this expense his block, let out in tenements in the usual way at two-and-sixpence or three shillings a room, brings in a full twelve per cent.—so says the agent. That these are “improved” dwellings cannot be denied; they are at least an improvement on certain rotten rookeries in the same city, heavily rented, where a visitor has to step gingerly lest he break through the flooring; but whether it can be called

charity undefiled I do not venture to say. And what, then, must be said of a large class of landlords whose doings are difficult to trace, and whose properties are a disgrace to civilization—landlords who deny the poor even the most needful sanitary improvement ? I have stood in rooms in this Christian country which for filth and insanitariness I should not have believed possible in Turkey.

It is the atrocious amount of the rents I want to press home to the national conscience—five to seven pounds, or more, for a space often no larger than an ordinary bathroom ! the bread-winner as a rule paying in rent from one-fourth to one-third of his weekly wage, considering his average yearly earnings. In some cities such rent-collecting is done as a sort of charity to the poor, not by hard-hearted agents, but by tender-hearted ladies as a means of influence over the poor tenants' morals. Surely it is a case of "Forgive them, they know not what they do," week after week collecting these wretched half-crowns or so, considering all it means ! For even in cases where poor folks' dwellings are thus managed with laudable effort at sanitarianess by private so-called "humanitarian" Unions of *Interest* (if one may venture thus to designate them) the people are thrown ruthlessly upon the street by means of the sheriff if they fail in rent.* And then one talks of morally influencing them ! Really, if one goes to the

* The Elberfeld System pays up arrears of rent, arranging with the landlord if he seem over-exacting ; and with *their* way of doing things they have a hold on the people's morals—a most thorough hold ! And they do not hang out the Christian flag, as some of us do when we look after the poor ; it is all simple, decent citizenship : yet witness the spirit of it, and see the results !

bottom, what influence can there be along with this Moloch of self-interest, called rent ?

To be sure, in writing such sentiments one risks being told that such thoughts and feelings are not only highly unbusiness-like, but even false morality ; but while I see poor folk huddled together in these dwellings by the half-dozen in a cage of a room, I question the morality that can extract these rents. If the rich were thus mulcted for their dwellings at the rate of five to seven or ten pounds for the cubic space of their lavatories, what an outcry there would be ; but the poor are helpless. In some of the larger towns, where the Town Councils are doing good work in demolishing houses unfit for habitation, the poor find it harder and harder to have any choice of rooms at all, that fine law of demand and supply not being likely to help them, or bring down the rents. Even in Edinburgh, which is by no means lowest in the scale of righteousness, I have stood in rooms which for filth and insanitariness, for landlords' rapaciousness, are enough to make angels weep. And what words shall describe the state of things in that Babel called London ! And children may be seen in these rooms, poor, poor little things ! What *do* you expect of the next generation ?

Since writing the above, and awaiting the return of our thoughts and interests from South Africa, the writer has gladly noted the *Daily News's* gallant effort on behalf of the "Overcrowded Fifth." Will readers get this appalling six-pennyworth, 175 pages of print, entitled : "*No Room to Live—Overcrowding in Town and Country*," the perusal of which is a terrible blow to one's British pride. An imperial people should be imperially housed. I have already

in the opening pages of this volume pointed to the fact that the South African war, with its tremendous cost, was undertaken because we believed some 180,000 Uitlanders needed our assistance. But here are 900,000 Londoners living under conditions a British gentleman would indignantly refuse for his dogs and horses. Nearly one-half of these 900,000 literally live the one-room life,* as many as seventeen (and this in Camberwell) having been found in one room. In such cases some sleep *in* the one bed, some *under* it, the rest huddling in corners God knows how, and with what chances of decency. Here are some extracts :—

“In one room a man, his wife, and eight children were found; in another room a man and wife and seven children, the eldest son with a wife, and all herded together like animals. That was within five minutes of St. James’s Hall. Last week, walking through a street in that district, — saw a notice, ‘A *part* of a room to let.’ He had long known that beds were let on the Box and Cox principle, not in comedy but in grim reality,† but the pressure had now become so great that beds were actually let on the eight hours’ system—three tenants in twenty-four hours.” And more—“The unprecedented pressure on house-room enables the worst class of property owners to levy what rents they please. ‘See those women who have just passed out,’ said a smart young Hebrew (the agent’s clerk), pointing towards the door with his pen;

* In Edinburgh (out of 60,000 families) about 14,000 live the one-room life, the figure in Glasgow being 31,000. London has nearly 200,000 one-room tenements, a “family” too often meaning a pell-mell mixing of lodgers of both sexes and all ages.

† The Rev. J. E. Hand, who is on the executive of the London Reform Union, overheard a conversation of two bricklayer’s labourers travelling on the Underground; it was about six o’clock, and they were going home from work, destined for Chelsea. “Let’s get out at Westminster,” said one. “It’s too early to go home yet. The room I sleep in is occupied by a young woman all day who works on night duty at one of the big hotels. She does not get up till seven to go to her work. Let’s get out and go to the pub.”

'they are all after the same house, and we have bid them against each other, till we are now getting 15s. for a house that once brought in 7s. 6d.'" No wonder the question is added, "How widows working fourteen hours a day for eight or nine shillings a week, can continue to pay half their earnings or more for a one-roomed hovel, is a perfect mystery. Through all their thankless toil, the ever present thought, like a spur to the laggard, is, 'The rent, the rent, only let me earn the rent!'

"The property sweater is bleeding his victims all over London. In the Mayfair district there are single rooms, twelve feet by ten, fetching as much as a pound a week. A vestryman of the neighbourhood has found eight people living in one of these rooms." . . . But there is more. "Only last February a man was sent to prison for six months for what really represented the lowest form of house-jobbing. It was proved in evidence that a certain property off the New Kent Road, inhabited by poor people, had been bought for purely speculative purposes, the owner and the agent admitting that they had agreed to raise the rents in order to sell the property afterwards at a profit. Rents which had been 13s. 6d. and 14s. 6d. were raised to 17s. and 20s. a week. Two of the tenants had carried on their tenancies as disorderly houses and been sent to prison; and it was proved in court that the agent had personally waited upon the other tenants, and had told some of them he didn't care for what purposes the houses were used so long as he got his rent. He actually incited tenants to turn their homes to such use. It was proved that not only he received exorbitant rents from the tenants, but was also receiving further weekly sums from them for the privilege of breaking the law. This agent was sent to prison (present writer's query: and the landlord?); but he is only one of scores of landlords and agents all over London who are doing the same kind of thing at the present moment."

But let readers turn for themselves to the *Daily News's* volume. That publication, and it is all fact, hard, miserable fact, makes one ashamed of being an Englishman, an inhabitant, maybe, of the wealthiest city this side of the

Atlantic. Our people are ruined, body and soul, before our very eyes. Take a youth, grown up in such a one-room hovel, yet having within him some latent force of character, vainly struggling against the odds of his wretched life ; if such a one snatched up a dagger or pistol one day in his helpless rage against Society, and like another Luccheni or Bresci committed some awful King-murder, we in Britain would duly hang him, deploring the depravity of such an outcast soul. *But to whose charge, think you, would God lay such a crime?!* We have carried a hundred millions to South Africa, a sum likely to be added to considerably before we can call back our troops ; it would cost nothing like it to cut the Gordian knot of the Housing Problem ; but we will not ! we will not ! Britain is hardened against the sorrows of her own poor !

The present writer, while acknowledging sympathetically the *Daily News's* patriotic attempt in holding up to British eyes this blackest of spots on the nation's garment, yet ventures to point out that the suggestions for any cure go not nearly deep enough ! Obtaining full powers for the County Council to deal summarily with slum-lords will be a good thing, but that will never sweep out this Augean stable. Having confessed our sin against our own flesh and blood, we must try and make a clean sweep ! *In the Housing Problem the British land system stands convicted.* Historically its days are over, and the sooner we rid the country of its evil influence, the better it will be for all classes. A newspaper like the *Daily News* is no mean force, and having made itself the champion of "Homeless England," one may surely hope it will never cease in effort until there is fair "room to live" for every subject of the

King. Then, and not till then, will Britain be a free country.

For, indeed, the Housing Problem cannot be truly solved until the land question is solved, the only way out of the slum of any lasting benefit consisting in redeeming British soil from that curse of landlordism now blighting it. Then the Housing Problem will solve itself. Then, both in town and country, we shall have a chance of "Homes" for the now homeless masses, and workingmen's dwellings under city auspices may form part of the great redemption. In the meantime one would not disparage the efforts of Town Councils and others in erecting "sanitary blocks," only let it be understood that such can never be more than a "half-way house." It is a radical cure Britain needs.

But there is yet another kind of homelessness—the common lodging-house. Let me speak of the better class only, either in the North or in the South. The horror of a mere look into what is known as the "low" common lodging-house (of which there are hundreds) might be too much for the reader. In Edinburgh he may find a very respectable model for the accommodation of "dossers," managed in the interest of philanthropic shareholders, and affording them, I rather think, satisfactory returns. And more recently another effort on behalf of "dossers" has blossomed forth in the same city—"The Jubilee Lodging-House and People's Palace, Limited," openly advertising its Preference shares at five per cent., adding cautiously, "there will be a substantial margin of profit for the Ordinary shareholders." Now even granted it is a well-managed concern, a *bona fide*

benefit to the homeless men and women for whom it is put up, *can it be right in any effort on behalf of our struggling masses to take five per cent. on Preference shares, with a "substantial margin" over and above on Ordinaries, when the British funds do not pay three?* If private capital for benefiting the strugglers cannot be got at that rate, then let the city raise capital, so that for very shame we may keep our hands clean from preying upon the poor ! And if a co-operative undertaking on behalf of the most miserable of our fellow-citizens cannot help proving "good business," any further gains out of the pockets of the poor should be sacred money, to be used in further efforts only on behalf of still larger numbers of these same homeless poor ! Such good dividends on any well-managed combined undertaking for the benefit of the people simply show that with absolutely no risk to its finances any city in the kingdom could lastingly do away with abject misery, if only it had the civic conscience, nay, the common-sense wisdom, to recognize its duty.

In London I have come upon a whole colony of such models—six or seven large buildings within a small area. The owner of one of them, a burly man in shirt-sleeves, happened to be standing in the street, looking cheerful and satisfied. It is mere business in his case, but he sees to order and decency. The "dossers" pay fourpence a night. There is the common hall in the basement, where they may cook their food by a large fire ; but, somehow, and despite all rough cleanliness, the place looks more like a trap for starved humanity than anything else. But it was the sleeping accommodation which proved an eye-opener. Take a space the size of a good dining-room, and you will find it contains about a dozen beds, or what pass for beds. Now,

that means a dozen fourpences a night—and these places are always well filled—that means four shillings a night for one of these otherwise unfurnished rooms—twenty-eight shillings a week. “Why, this man, even allowing for the public room, must at least make fifteen per cent. on his house property,” said I to my informant, a slumland minister. “More like twenty,” ejaculated he, “more like fifty.”* He has worked for years among the helpless poor; maybe, it was his indignation rising which made him say fifty. Twenty, in all conscience, is enough! And I brought away the distinct impression that the common lodging-house is the best-paying investment in all London; and anyone with a little capital can fatten and grow rich on the starved-out dregs of society—the “fourpenny dosser.” Yet one has to listen to people who say how good it is that someone is found to provide for these poorest of the poor, for that they would otherwise be on the merciless street—which is true.

These “dosser” palaces differ in character—here men only, here women, here the whole happy family. And that, especially in the latter case, it is something of a permanent population, turning in after work-hours night after night, was shown by the fact that they all knew my guide—a district evangelist—begging him to remember them for a day in the country on Bank Holiday. There were at least

* But for the awful ground rents in the City (see p. 136), if not just “fifty,” yet something equally atrocious; the very soil-owner, and though he be the noblest of men, thus preying upon the “dosser.” What a rule of unrighteousness this British land system discloses when one follows it into every hidden corner of its wretched consequences.

two score of people in that basement hall, each couple, with or without children, sitting over their food, it being evening. And this was all they knew, or possibly ever have known, for home !

The last block visited was an advance on this—something in the way of furnished apartments, actually. There was a caretaker at the main entrance, to see to orderliness ; to see to the coming in of rents, too, with power to evict. I begged to be shown upstairs—the house was divided into single tenements, a number on each landing, whitewashed and clean (not to forget a common washhouse, in the back-yard), an advance, certainly, on many another stair I had climbed—and I was ushered into one of these furnished apartments, finding a dock-labourer and his wife and a baby at their tea. Said my guide, “ You see, there are many who, living from hand to mouth, never can lay by the three or four pounds to furnish for themselves, and here, if they will behave themselves, they have a little home all ready, for a weekly payment.” And the poor slave of a dock-labourer smiled and thought it was nice. “ What is the rent ? ” I inquired. “ Six-and-sixpence a week.” And I viewed the chamber—for furniture the veriest prophet’s chamber—“ a bed, a table, a stool (*i.e.*, two chairs), and a candlestick ”—at least, a gas-burner, and that was all ; and it filled the room.

The poor woman, a little pock-marked thing, evidently made an attempt at “ home,” frills of pink tissue-paper adorning the mantelshelf, and hanging round a couple of gay-coloured pictures on the roughest of whitewashed walls. Nothing, indeed, has sunk more into my heart and conscience during these visits than the pathetic attempts of

many of these people, despite all wretchedness, to give the poor place a look of home.

Now, this small room, by the ordinary rents of slumland, in itself would have been amply rented at three shillings a week. So these few sticks of furniture were provided for the dock-labourer (and he smiled when spoken to) at the rate of three-and-sixpence a week—nine pounds a year—because the poor wretch can never scrape together the three pounds or so needed to furnish for himself! And this is done in broad daylight, in what goes by the name of a model—a building, at any rate, shown me as a “good thing” for the homeless poor. And I felt I had seen enough, going my way sick at heart. Verily, there is a vampire in this country, called Capital, and no one doubts its respectability, growing fat and lusty on the starved and hungry poor.

Is there no help? Cannot the city—the community, that is—rise in very pity for these most helpless of citizens?

The number of children seen that afternoon was beyond counting. I was assured that many of them escape the board-school. Be that as it may, the board-school cannot save them. But it is right certain they are being trained and taught by their hapless environment, and if they live—death being merciful to childhood in slumland—they will furnish the material for another generation of homelessness, and capital will continue to feed on the poor.

This is why anyone who has gone even a little into these things cannot but say that, considering the immorality of the one room, and the whole condition of slum-slavery, considering also the viciousness of the underlying money-

interest, it is hard to see how a Christian man can be the holder of slum-property, no matter at what rental. If he be a not-wealthy Christian, let him keep clear of this sort of business altogether ; if he be a man of wealth, let him ask his own conscience. It does seem a questionable thing to have any part whatsoever in this filching of rents from an oppressed population. Making up for any pocketings with Bible readings to the slum-dwellers doesn't do. Have the Bible readings, by all means, but as a Christian—"if thou wilt be perfect !" It is difficult to speak of these things ; let me rather speak by an example.

In one of my recent wanderings abroad I was introduced to a gentleman who had built two large quadrangles for working-men's dwellings. He himself showed me over them—splendid dwellings, each family having their three or four rooms, clean, and with all conveniences, and not open to their neighbours as in the Peabody models, where families are anything but "to themselves," the two quadrangles housing nearly two thousand people ; quite a townlet—a townlet, too, in perpetual growth. He did not tell me, but I learned afterwards, that originally he invested fifty thousand pounds, never touching a penny of interest, but using the rents, which in themselves are moderate, for adding new houses year after year. Now, this man makes no pretence whatever of being a Christian. He is a man who has made a fortune in business, and it gives him pleasure to spend some of it in this way ; he gave, and gave fully and entirely, and without a calling back, without an eye to even a farthing of interest, he gave fifty thousand pounds. Now, Christianity or not, this is a Christian way of benefiting the poor. Why do Christian people, if they do invest in

slum-property, and even if they invest with any idea of looking after the people, make it a matter of business? Under present circumstances it is money to which groans and sore hardships cling, and it should not go into one's own banking account. If a worldly man takes his interest, well, he is a worldly man; but a Christian who would benefit the poor morally, surely he would be nearer his high calling if he touched not a penny.

Let this not be misjudged; it is not written for fault-finding, but to point to the nobler way. I know there are good people here and there in all our cities investing in slum-property with the kindest intention of having a moral hold thereby over the tenants. In how far this lends colour to even an appearance of self-importance, through the power it gives, is not now the question; the point is, whether these very people, who, one gladly believes, would seek to influence some few of the poor for their good, could not do a nobler and better thing in allowing their capital to go altogether for the people's true welfare. He who sought to help the West Indian slaves by morally bracing them did a noble thing; but he who set out for breaking the chain altogether did a nobler thing! And, surely, both the example and the benefit won by a *giving* of fifty thousand, or twenty, or ten thousand, are of a higher order than can possibly be attained by merely investing any such sum with an idea of morally uplifting the people, yet with just a wee bit of an eye to one's own interest. It is the out-and-out sacrifice which is wanted nowadays. And they who go half-way now towards the noble thing are the very people who are wanted to go the whole way. They *have it in them*, if they will but break the last string

holding them to their coin. Will they turn to that chapter, "Workman's Home," in *A Colony of Mercy*, just for an example of what can be done for the poor in the way of wholesome three and four-roomed dwellings at the rent now exacted for the one hole ; will they turn back in these pages also to "Homelessness and its Cure" ; and will they consider if they cannot perchance be of the leaders wanted for taking back a groaning people to a true Own-Home ?

No, this is not written in a spirit of fault-finding, but to point to the nobler way. The writer felt stung when shown over those beautiful quadrangles, and learning afterwards that he who thus loved the people, loving them better than his fifty thousand pounds, made no profession whatever of having done it for the Master's sake. That Master, we know, will one day acknowledge him and his gift. She almost felt jealous that one who does not "profess" could do the out-and-out thing to the extent even, as far as possible, of not letting the left hand know the right hand's doing, while Christian people in their efforts of bettering the home-life of the poor go halting between giving and keeping. How much some Christians could do if they but recognized their true privilege of setting the example ! How they could lead the way in solving this question of truly helping the people, and what a wealth of blessing they could leave to their own children,* for do they not know that their Master has a way of repaying double ?

* Calling one day on an acquaintance, the mother of a large family of growing boys and girls, I was received with the lugubrious information, "We have lost all our money !" After the first few commonplaces of condolence, I ventured to say, "You have got to be strong now ; it may be the making of your boys." One could not say that to every woman in such trouble, for it *was* a loss, the

Yet the thought has grown upon me that because Christian and worldling alike look after their dividends, there is no present help for the poor except by the city's becoming trustee for slumland. If the individual cannot be trusted, the city surely can. The city, or County Council, could raise capital to any amount at three per cent., or even less. The city could buy out landlords at some just valuation, and thus introduce a new order of things—which valuation, of course, must not be guided by the sweater's own estimate. It is folly to talk of "compensation" when the time has come for iniquitous "vested interests" to give way to the common weal. Slum-lords, like brewers, have had their day—indeed, to the hurt of the nation. The city would not want to seek its own gains, and yet it would be a gainer by uplifting that down-trodden people. If British cities took to any Elberfeld System, this housing of the working population under city auspices should, and could quite easily, form a part of it. Is it not self-evident that, in a very real sense, it would pay? In ten years' time the city would be a clear gainer, not in dividends out of the pockets of the poor, and yet in money saved, because of crime prevented, of beggary prevented, of illness prevented—

husband being what is termed a merchant-prince, and here was an income of thousands gone. But meeting her again later, I found she had discovered the "sweet uses of adversity." "You were right," she said, "*I already begin to see it in the boys!*" How many fathers and mothers would "see it in their children," if they could but learn to think little of their wealth! They imagine they are hoarding a pleasant competence for their boys and girls, when they are really bugging their own love of money—hoarding a curse, maybe, for their children!

because of a lessening of that incubus, the helplessly "submerged."

This slum-investing by Christian or worldling is after all but an example ; there are a hundred things like it, not perhaps so easily pointed out. The poor do suffer for the rich man's love of gain. It is not of the sweater now one would speak, for the sweater is altogether out of court here. But look at the hard yet "legitimate" ways of business, going by the technical name of competition, of demand and supply, of capital *versus* labour ; it is because capital—the rich man's wealth—rules that the mass of workers is for ever left to struggle in vain. There is an awful accusation in that cry for a "living wage" ; the mass of workers cannot get it, because accumulating capital is forever taking the very bread out of their mouths. The fact is, the whole fabric of modern society would totter if one were able with a high hand to set right the many wrongs ; we cannot set them right, and we cannot because mammon is the prince of this world ; he is to this day, and in Christian England. The whole of modern life, of trade, of politics, and what we call civilization even, is wrapped up with this mammon rule, and it will be so to the end of the world. That is why Christian people are told not to be "of the world."

But they are "of the world" ; see how they are. Do not Christian people, if they have a chance, like a good income, a good stroke of business, quite as much as their worldly neighbour ? Do they not like to live in luxurious houses, sit down to a choice dinner table, dress in "purple and fine linen" like their worldly neighbour ? Is not the world continually creeping in by every fissure and crevice

even into the Churches? Do not the very ministers, some of them—but one would rather point to the fact that the Churches, surely, are saved by the absence of wealth in most of the clergy. It is curious that just some such comfortable ministers have been saying to me: "You will never succeed in stirring up a 'Colony of Mercy' work here. Where is your Bodelschwingh?" Where, indeed! Then let me show what makes a Bodelschwingh. Why is God with that man? Why has he an almost unearthly power in grappling with the gates of hell? Shall I tell you the secret of this man's life? It is the entire surrender of body and soul—aye, and of all those things we hold dear, which Scripture sums up in the expression the "pride of life"—the entire laying down of all these things. It is not *wrong* to live in beautiful houses, not *wrong* in Christian folk to surround themselves, some of them, with all the appurtenances of wealth; but there is something in a Christian breaking the alabaster vase of even his legitimate possessions and pouring the incense of the perfect surrender at the Master's feet.

You have read, some of you, how that pastor of epileptics is a man born to an honourable estate, as the world goes. He, the son of a Prime Minister and born to a coronet centuries old—go and have a look into his daily life, and if you can hear him speak about what he calls "the blessed poverty of Christ,"* you will carry away with you a

* This is not the idea of the old Roman Catholic ascetics, or even of "good works"; it is simply the Christian, so living in his Master's presence, and for His kingdom, that the world has lost all hold over him. Bodelschwingh's salary at the hands of the Colony is a hundred and fifty pounds a year! the Colony, of course, housing him like all its workers.

lesson ! Bodelschwingh has a great idea that the "blessed poverty of Christ" ought to be a part of our Christ-likeness. It will not be given to every Christian to follow him here, but well for him who can. And he will not call this voluntary resigning, this "poverty," a *cross* to be carried after the Master ; no, he says it is a privilege ; it is the Christ-*likeness*. He says it is a part of what we call the "Imitation of Christ."

Do you wonder this man is a prince with God ? Why, even that old heathen Diogenes said he was richer than Alexander ; then what must the inward wealth of a Christian be who has so risen above earthly things, and not only his inward wealth, but his outwardly-manifested power as a soldier of Christ ?

Yes, the world has got into the Churches, and even Christian people have not altogether clean hands ; they *are* hand-in-glove, some more, some less, with that mammon of unrighteousness which, like a dead-weight of oppression, hangs over the heads of the poor, and against which, be it for a living wage, be it for the bare humanity within them, they struggle in vain. We, the upper classes, want the lion's share, and that is why the starvation wage only is left for the mass of the people. And then we say, "If only they didn't drink !"

How often have I heard this, even from people sincerely anxious to help the poor ; but there are others who, consciously or not, make this fearful evil, which is ruining the poor, a cloak for themselves. Ever since the days of Adam it has been a failing of humanity to lay the blame on others ; we are always seeing the mote in a brother's eye

long before pulling out the beam of our own ; and do we not read in *Hudibras* that we

“Compound for sins we are inclined to
By damning those we have no mind to?”

Surely the drinking propensity of the slums is a terrible evil, and they are right who seek to suppress it. The temperance movement, the “blue ribbon,” and all that surely is right—right in aim, at least, if not altogether in principle. But our temperance work is putting the cart before the horse, beginning at the wrong end ; it is striving with an *effect*, and not going to the bottom of the *cause*. Just picture to yourselves these drinking poor in that one-room hole. Some of us know what physical debility is, when the doctor tells us to “feed up,” or go for change of air ; we know what nerves are. Do you imagine the poor working-woman is of a different make ? What of her nervous system—underfed, baby-rearing, on her feet early and late, when we would be on the sofa ? She knows there is, or thinks there is, a momentary “pick-me-up” in the dram, and she goes and has it. If some Elberfeld System looked after her better feeding, much of that dram-drinking would stop. And take the man coming home from his eight or ten hours’ work—or no work ; he would like to have something to set against the day’s toil, the day’s failure—just something his humanity is crying out for, and rightly. He comes home to that hole four yards square, babies fretting, the hungry children quarrelling, maybe the worried woman nagging—well, he kicks. What, sir, would *you* do ? And then he goes and drinks, simply to drown the warring feelings within him, some for good,

some for evil. Isn't he a man just like ourselves, with his yearnings, his strivings, his failings? Do you think they drink for sheer pleasure? It is because the devil has a hold of them; but who has let in the devil?

This, in a few words, is the story, but not the whole story. Think of the hard-won pence going to swell the gain of publicans, and flowing quietly into the banking accounts of prosperous shareholders! How many, think you, if one could overhaul the banking accounts of only this one city, hold brewery shares? But we are very loud against the people's drink. This city is famous for its breweries, and even good men live and die here, leaving fortunes made in a brewery. No brilliant fortunes could be made, if no one took more than a moderate glass. And why is it that nearly all the public-houses in Britain are owned by the brewers themselves, leased out to the publican, if not to see that he drives a brisk trade? This is why it is putting the cart before the horse to work for temperance in the slums. It is working at the wrong end, or, at least, at the weaker end. If one could ensure a pledge *at the other end* at the same time, a pledge of abstinence from love of coin, then, perchance, the thing might work. Brewing, you say, is business, like other business. So it is; and if the worldly man makes a fortune thereby, well, he is a worldly man; but that Christian people, the bearers of honourable names, should be hand-in-glove with this men-killing business is a sorrowful thing.

Only the other day I was told of a clergyman who did as his conscience bade him, speaking from his pulpit against the sin of the brewing interest, showing how it drove the people to perdition. It so happened that the most

conspicuous man of his congregation—being a free church, he was probably the one man the church could ill afford to lose—was a brewer, or brewer's shareholder. The man wrote to his minister, telling him if he did not as publicly from his pulpit retract what he had been saying he would leave the church. I do not know the sequel of the story ; one is almost afraid to inquire : but is it not true that the very voices of the clergy are in bondage to mammon ? They dare not have the courage of their Master. And why not ? Because there are those among them who themselves are not proof against the good things of this world ; because the Churches themselves are mixed up with worldliness. Indeed, I know of a list of brewery shareholders, containing the names of some forty ministers of the Gospel !* One wonders if any of them have got into a way of saying "The poor would be all right if only they did not drink !" Possibly these forty live in luxurious houses, or have fashionable wives, and must add to their income as best they can. Possibly they even preach temperance.

How can the temperance question have anything but a hard battle in this country, when some of those who loudly promote it are yet connected with the drink trade ? I am not speaking without knowledge, and when I think of those drinking poor it is hard not to say all one knows.

* I have since learned that this is not an unusual thing, clergy and other respectable folk to any number adorning the shareholder-lists of British breweries ; no wonder one speaks of the "well-nigh invincible brewing interest" in this country ! And it is because so many of us through love of money have a hand in the terrible evils we affect to deplore, that the social condition of our cities is such a festering sore, and our attempts at cure mere mockery.

I have the following from a correspondent. He is a timber merchant. Says he: "On November —th, 189—, at the ——— Arms, at one time a fully licensed public-house, now only having a sweet and tobacco license, the annual timber and coppice-wood sale was held. I was not present at the dinner, but during the sale after, in the large room, there were handed round port, sherry, and punch. In other words, widow N.N., the hostess of the ——— Arms, was not allowed by her temperance-promoting landlord to sell beers, foreign wines, spirits, etc., to improve her living, but that same landlord, on the same premises, could give away such drinks in order to stimulate the biddings to increase the profits on his timber, thereby ensuring his having extra money to spend either in luxuries, or in charitable objects—such as the promotion of total abstinence among those engaged in the commercial occupations of life."

This sounds sad irony, but my informant vouches for the truth; and he, having his life long been a "Rechabite," from that hour has abjured the pledge; not, of course, therefore taking to drinking, but it seemed to him, like the phylacteries of old, a badge admitting of much hypocrisy.

He corroborates his experience by a further example: "Two years later at —, and also at the annual timber sale, as I was ascending the steps I saw two or three men coming from the estate buildings with large white jugs containing a steaming liquor, which they brought up, and began to pour out and hand round. The liquor was punch, and very hot, and very strong—too strong, as you will presently see."

But I need not give all the particulars of a disreputable

story, as contained in my correspondent's letter—of drinking customers, and presently swearing and fighting customers, the price of timber being steadily improved by his lordship's* agent, with this upshot in one instance, "they (*i.e.*, two punch-flushed bidders) ran another pound per acre to the price—say so many acres, so many pounds. Result of giving punch at that sale: *his lordship — pounds in pocket and two men drunk.* . . . "To illustrate, or characterize it," says my informant, "what should you say to a brewer who, after appointing a manager to make and sell the beer, should have no further concern with the brewery than to receive the profits, going about the country meanwhile promoting total abstinence? † You would, I say, have the same story in principle, only perhaps in a more striking incongruity."

My correspondent being a true observer, I quote him a little further, "When you come to consider what enormous influence 'standing drink' has in business transactions, and the difficulty of young men to hold their course without partaking, and the losses often sustained by refusal, you can understand how hard a matter it is, say, for a young commercial traveller, to abstain, the habit of taking and 'standing' drink, to his ultimate downfall, being almost forced on him lest he lose orders, which means his livelihood; and it is *not till those who can afford some extra money for luxuries and charities realize that they must set the*

* "His lordship"—in courtesy for landlordship; there is no title involved, only a coppice-wood owner and worker for total abstinence.

† The supposition is not so impossible as it sounds; the writer of these pages was present at a city-mission and temperance meeting once, held in the grounds and under the auspices of members of a certain well-known and highly respected brewer's family.

example (not only the 'blue ribbon' example which is cheap), but showing themselves ready to suffer some loss, that others who are struggling for a bare pittance will be emboldened to set their face resolutely against the pernicious habit of standing drink to customers, etc., etc." But what if, instead of thus setting the example, there are well-reputed temperance men, pocketing gains like the money above-mentioned ?

These facts are given in illustration of a sorrowful truth ; and they have come to hand unsought. Then, what must one think ? Is it not that they cannot be so rare an exception, not even among us Christian folk ? For those of whom the above is told are Christian folk, at least have a name to be.

Surely one would prefer throwing the cloak of charity over such tales, as one endeavours to throw it over the names involved ; but that the writer, having looked into the slum-life of the people, could not but go "to the bottom of it !" The poor, to be sure, have their own sins, but this book is a witness to their wrongs. And it is not to cast a slur upon the two or three Christian money-makers thus unhappily quoted, but rather to bring forward undeniable proof that as a Christian community our hands are *not* clean. "Whited sepulchres," said One who knew the heart.

What revelations there might be if banking accounts were not such hidden things ! I know a street of poor folk's houses—and a wretched street it is—and I noticed that almost over every door the same name and address stood as that of the house-owner. The address not being far away, I went there. It was a shop of a certain kind which lives on the poor. What a wealthy man this dealer must be, owning all these houses ! But not at all ; he is merely

agent for other people in good circumstances, who would not, perhaps, like their names openly associated with this back street. As for that agent, the poor in that street say he is a hard man (just as a Jamaica slave-driver before the emancipation might be hard on behalf of some British owner), and inquiring a little further, I found that this agent who is so hard on the poor in the interest of respectable, maybe even Christian, landlords is an office-bearer in his church. What strange things one discovers by only a little looking about !

I read the other day that, having made a fortune, "one retires to a life of godliness and luxury," and I thought it was the writer's evil sneer. But since I have myself gone a little into these things, I am prepared to say much the same: some, having made a fortune (God and their own consciences know how), retire to a life of luxury and "godliness"—mere negative selfishness; others adding to it the active selfishness of "good works." It is when we have wronged our neighbours that we are apt, some of us, to support mission work on their behalf. Surely great is the mystery of compromise in a Christian land.

It is the half-and-halfness of such Christians which is a witness to their own conscience. They know they are in thrall, but the bond holding them is strong. I once stood in the presence of a man of this kind, and his face was the face of one bearing a heavy burden.

Let us look, then, to our hidden partnerships—fortunes being made, or having been made, one would not quite like to say how—say in the drink traffic, say in the opium traffic, as an example only; for there are many unprincipled business ways or doubtful commercial dealings by

which a man profits without, maybe, actively engaging in them, or inquiring too closely. As for the opium traffic, is not Britain herself answerable for it, deriving over three millions "Tens of Rupees" revenue out of that iniquity ? indeed, more than twice as much not so long ago ; but the Chinese, on whom Britain forced the noxious drug, now grow their own ! It is rather a fashion to cry out against this national sin ; but are we so sure our own banking accounts could bear the searching light of day ? When one comes across such shady stories without making it one's business really to inquire for them, one gets suspicious. What inconsistencies will be known in that Day, when all books, including bankbooks, will be open !

It is an inconsistency for instance, to say so in passing, when ladies and other good folk who would not soil their hands with brewery shares invest in the Aërated Bread Company, which pays 40 per cent. dividends and engages its shop and kitchen girls at ten to twelve shillings a week. They are discharged after five years, except those retained as forewomen at a better wage. The flourishing Company thus frankly takes advantage of the pocket money wage for which thousands of respectable girls will work, salving its conscience by the regulation that no girl is employed who cannot give a guarantee of a home with her parents, or with a responsible guardian. This looks like taking care of the girls, but it means that a girl's father, a hard-driven man in all probability, must partly support his daughter who gives a long day's work for what certainly cannot be called a living wage, though supplemented by some light food. Very properly the girls are held above "tips." The A.B.C. washes the girls' aprons, but they must dress above

their poor earnings; the Company allows them 2s. 3d. a week for three months in case of sickness; but what of the foundation of ill-health laid in girls who, though they get a yearly fortnight after two years' service, cannot afford recruiting? The explanation of all this is, that girls abound. It is "market value." The Co.'s earnings last year admitted of a *bonus* in the form of a new allotment at par, bringing the year's dividends to something like 54 per cent. Not even such a *bonus* expends itself in what some of us would think but tardy equity to the girls! The worst is, I am told, this company sets the example to other companies, who do not even consider whether any girls they employ at niggardly wage have a home or not. Now surely the A.B.C. shareholders—there are good folk among them—might set another kind of example. It may be that they never heard of what "profit-sharing" is capable of (see pp. 282—286); it may be that they only need the encouragement of such knowledge. Who is to set a noble example if not such a Company! The National Telephone Co. works a girl for eight hours a day in the "connecting room" at the handsome wage of six shillings a week, with a prospective gradual rise to ten shillings. The Lipton, Limited, is another such concern, against which grave charges have been brought. No wonder this sort of thing, which is only too common among us, is called "white slavery." We have wept over *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and some think the Boers "got all they deserved because, you know, they have been so unkind to the natives." What, then, about British kindness to thousands of girl slaves, employed at starvation wage by our wealthy companies and business houses? If we strove to raise the people to a more

worthy level, there would not be so many hapless girls on the market, and, paradoxical as it may seem, the domestic servant question might find a solution. Observe, this is not descending to the depths of the "Bitter Cry," where a woman makes match-boxes at twopence-farthing the gross, as a type of the hundreds of similar cruelties in wealthy Britain. It is the nation's ill-distributed wealth, which, having to be made year after year, is the slave-driver among our people, the poor folk's hunger being the whip.

But the hand-in-gloveness of "godliness" with mammon, of Christian profession, even "holy" living, with money concerning which it is not polite to speak, is one of the strangest and saddest things in our midst. If wealthy Christians do not like reading this, then *what does it prove?*

And is it wonder our social conditions are what they are, when such money-makers are in the very Churches? Well for him, for her, who under the eye of the conscience-proving Spirit can say he is quite clear of mammon-love and that his hands *are* clean!

May one here raise a question? A great brewer has presented a certain city with a magnificent Hall attached to a public institution. It is curiously situated within a stone's throw of some of those drinking slums; but though I have inquired a little, I could not learn that any protest was raised in that city against accepting the brewer's munificence on the ground that it was money made by drink, or that any avowedly Christian people, abstainers more especially, have decided to "abstain" from entering that Hall, as a testimony. True, the Hall being wedded to certain functions, it is scarcely possible now for some folk to keep out of it, even if their conscience bade

them. Be that as it may, one would not blame the brewer for his gift; he has acted according to his light and, as a brewer, has done a handsome thing; indeed, a brewer may also have a conscience speaking to him at times, and may want to do some "good" with his money. But the Christian people in that city are bound to act by another light, even a Kingdom-of-Heaven light. There the Hall stands, a silent if awful witness, going down to coming generations, labelled with the brewer's name—an awful if silent witness to countless lives ruined by drink. For no brewer could make so great a fortune but for the country's curse of drunkenness.

The brewer paid down over a hundred thousand pounds as a free gift. Cannot Christian people in that city—there are some that could do it almost single-handed!—but cannot some of them band themselves together and find a similar sum, a sort of expiation fund for raising, say, a lodging-house and nightly shelter for the unhappy men and women (slum-folk mostly) in danger of drink—even a well-managed model, like those in the Grassmarket spoken of (p. 189), only with this difference, that it need not pay five per cent. on Preference shares, nor anything of a "substantial" nature on Ordinaries? Its gains (for it is right that the able poor should pay moderately to keep them above pauperism) should go towards further efforts on behalf of yet more probable victims. It will be remembered that Hooley in his time of prosperity presented St. Paul's Cathedral with a set of gold Communion plate. When the Hooley crash came, the Chapter did not think those vessels clean, and was going to return them. But what was the good of returning them to Hooley? A man stepped forward, *paid*

down their value, and handed them back to the Chapter, clean now, that is sanctified by a price paid down in expiation. In some such way that Hall should be sanctified for the city's use—and the *Christian* is the man to step forward for the price of lost souls has gone to its rearing ! Really, looking at that Hall, and looking at the Grass-market models, how can one help one's thoughts ? Confessedly the common lodging-house would never be required, if the poor did not ruin their lives by intemperate habits ; but here is a great city fairly proud of the fine Hall built with brewery proceeds, and here are investors taking high dividends in an otherwise praiseworthy effort at housing the victims of the public-house — victims indirectly, if not in every instance in actual fact. Let the Christian people of that city square this with their consciences.

The city and the brewer can, of course, easily be identified. If I here suppress the names, it is only as a little proof, if it will be accepted, that I would not willingly hurt anyone's feelings ; I only protest, it is high time to rise to something of a citizenship whose hands are clean.*

And, let me add, the brewer's example has been followed by a whisky distiller presenting that same city with the funds for a new Town Hall. Will anyone in that city ever again dare say : "The poor would be all right, if only they did not drink ?" It is a confessedly Christian city—

* A Bavarian brewer has just made Munich one of his chief legateses, but, then, Munich has no Grassmarket and no Cowgate, no professing teetotal Christians too ! In Bavaria, moreover, beer-brewing is amenable to the country's laws, containing but half the intoxicant matter and more nutritive ingredients than even pure British beers (see end of footnote, p. 217). The case is altogether different.

that is, more full, perhaps, of confessing Christians than most cities; but when I expressed some of my feelings to a Christian man there, he said: "Ah, well, I fear unitedly our Christianity does not go for much." Will Christ be satisfied, think you, with our individual "goodness," when unitedly it is so ragged a garment? *

Literally, on laying down her pen, the writer is informed of the newest development concerning that Hall, viz., that along with its natural uses it is available for "religious service" upon occasion. Possibly British brewers are honestly pleased at this. It almost looks like Christianity setting its seal on the "good one may do" with money, even though made by reason of the country's drunkenness. You may worship God in the very gates of hell, no doubt; and religious service in whatever locality is a good thing, but it is not thus that Hall is sanctified for that city's use—not while these drinking slums accuse us to our face; not while professing Christians—God knows how many, and, perhaps, in that very city—invest in the drink-trade! "*What would Jesus do?*" We have lately been taught to ask ourselves this question; what *would* He do—say, if He were a citizen of that city? Maybe straight from that

* Sydney Smith said rather cynically that "even the British bench of bishops would divide a murder between them." It only means that whatever may be said as to any individual goodness among us—and thank God it does exist—under the shelter of any corporate capacity, we are deplorably weak. Individually we go to St. James's Hall, getting up monster demonstrations against all manner of unrighteousness; nationally we hardly ever do anything that would interfere with individual money-making. See the British attitude to Armenia by way of a recent example. Individually we declare we would like to bind Turkey, hand and foot; as a nation we do no such thing. There is too much British money in Turkey.

Hall He would go into the nearest slum—no great distance—and weep over it; maybe He would say: “Verily, verily”—but one’s pen fails; let readers try and finish this sentence honestly for themselves.

Great, indeed, is the mystery of compromise! But it is not thus the Christian conscience of that city will to its own satisfaction prove the purity of its motive. Strangely enough, most Christian folk in that city are teetotalers.

To return to the temperance question. I think it was Mr. Moody who was once asked by a brewer or brewer’s shareholder if he really thought it wrong to traffic in liquor? Said Moody (it was like him to say so): “If you can ask the Lord’s blessing on every cask you send out, send it!” That man thereafter washed his hands of the business. Now this is where “blue-ribbon” work and all our efforts for Christianizing the slums ought to begin—in *our own pockets*.

Temperance work in this drink-cursed country is certainly right, but one would like to see it on a right footing. As for its fundamental principle, it is not the “pledge” which can be an honour to Christianity, Christianity rather requiring the sin-conquering liberty which is a law to itself. And more—not the most ardent temperance worker can get rid of the fact that Christ turned water into wine; and that in the most solemn hour of His life He took the cup and blessed it, teaching us that “every creature of God is good if it is received with thanksgiving.” Likewise every creature of God, if the devil get hold of it, can become a means of perdition. It is not the fire which in itself is to blame if the house is on fire, though, of course, it is right in any given instance to stamp out the fire. Now, in our

warfare against drink, we ought to fight with true weapons and on a true basis.

Let this be rightly judged. It is not so much the practice as the principle that calls for some setting right. Total abstinence is sound medical advice to any drink-beset person, and, of course, sound also in that case spiritually; "Let him that stole *steal no more*"—let him abjure the very sight of his temptation. But to make of total abstinence a sort of Christian "shibboleth" for the Church at large is a human device nowhere even hinted at in the New Testament. By all means drink water only and live frugally all round, since both for Christianity and health you cannot live too simply; but do not make of yourself a slave to abstinence any more than to intemperance—the charity of special example to a weaker brother, of course, excepted. On this ground "local veto" has its right. On the other hand, to carry your "shibboleth" to the length of *vino sacro* requires for its justification the further prudence only, to christen babies with milk, because water unrestrained has been known to drown men.

The mischief of the drink question lies deeper. The curse of alcoholic liquor springs from the fact that the devil so easily has hold of the cup. But the devil may have hold of things also which in themselves are a divine ordering of nature. One can but refer here to the sin of impurity. Yet the convent vow (total abstinence pledge!) is not the true victory in this respect. It is a weak-kneed expedient. Again, many of the well-to-do overfeed to the length of gout or other bodily punishment; we do not therefore make a religious virtue of fasting. Paul's advice is to "keep under" the body, not to starve or immure it.

"Quit you like men, be strong," he says. True, these things do not fully correspond, since the human race certainly can do without either wine or beer. But they serve to show where, on spiritual grounds, the principle of total abstinence is wrong. The Gospel requires free men, not pledge-holders.

Indeed, as far as one can see, neither drink nor mammon will be got out of this present-day world, and like many another stumbling-block, may be among us for a purpose. Why has Sin been permitted to make its inroad into God's fair creation, but that men should face it, overcome it, thereby acquiring moral sinew and spiritual stature? The Christian coward flees the world, the Christ-man is in it, but not of it. Temperance folk would annihilate drink, whereas God gives the fruit of the vine year after year, watching men's use of it. We are always on the wrong track, when we seek to be wiser than God. God, too, has made the silver and the gold, that men might learn to give them back to Him. But it is a strange thing how Mammon and Belial in this country work hand-in-hand.

The weekly drink-bill of this nation is about three millions sterling. Why quarrel only with the consumer? Would it not seem that at least half the blame lies with the pockets which absorb these millions—say a hundred millions a year, made up by the pence and shillings of the poor! And not, indeed, by their pence and shillings; as has truly been said, it is the very bread out of their children's mouths. A hundred millions out of the working-man's pocket, and for what?—if but at least we gave them decent drink. But we poison them! We madden them! It is not only the whisky or gin, indeed it is far too often

the deleterious admixtures these poor slaves buy with their whisky or gin, because some money-maker finds it pays him even better to sell drug for drink. These things go on despite Adulteration Acts.* Why does a civilized nation not set a closer watch over the drink given to its half-starved people? The breweries, indeed, are not wanting in this country which turn out two kinds of ale—what they call “family ale” for the respectable, and public-house ale specially brewed for double and treble consumption: in other words, for making the people drunk. Why does a civilized nation, let alone a Christian nation, not look into this? Is it not true, then, that these people are just driven to hell by the forces of mammon above them?

Take the lowest view only, the common-sense standpoint of the British ratepayer. We think we cannot interfere with any Briton's individual liberty—his right to produce and sell drink if he chooses, even though it be bad drink. It is not really our love of liberty which prevents us, but our regard for money-bags, whatever name be theirs. Tens of thousands every year are ruined by the drink-curse, the ratepayers finding the means for workhouses, infirmaries, lunatic asylums, prisons. If it were not for the so-called

* Britain quite lately has had a wholesome scare through beer-poisoning with arsenic. How many years of half-poisoning will have led up to this, undiscovered because keeping within the degree of injuring without killing? Very likely this “glucose” is used more extensively than we dream, getting into our children's sweet-meats, into our jams, and non-intoxicating drinks. Why are these things, except for the unholy haste to be rich, which has come to be the mainspring of all we call “business?” Surely sugar is cheap enough, but “glucose” on the face of it is cheaper. Abroad the public health goes before private wealth; in Bavaria, at any rate, it is penal to brew beer with anything but malt, hops, and water.

vested interests, we might perhaps see the folly of this. Some, of course, see and deplore it, but the money-ruled national conscience does not.

For, lastly, the British revenue from alcoholic liquor is *33 millions*—it is here we come upon the crowning iniquity ! If a great nation cannot do without a revenue drawn from individual besottedness, it is to be feared it signs its own death-warrant. At present the country's curse of drunkenness is the mainstay of the country's finances, yet Britain is a civilized country—of her as a Christian country we will not now speak. What a civilized Government, where such drunkenness prevails, should consider its prerogative is this: it should tax prohibitively all distilled liquor, and it should draw the snake's fang from beers, having breweries and retail places (there would not be so many then) under close inspection. There is such a thing as decent barley-brew, not known now in this country, which would do little harm and be food almost to the working-man. Wines do not so much figure here, yet it is no secret that foreign imports are mixed with additional alcohol for the British palate. As for the revenue, if Britain strove to raise her masses along the lines indicated in these pages she could open up a commendable source of wealth, recompensing her out and out for a giving up of those shameful 33 millions. Apparently, she is too blind as yet to see this, it being one of the arts of the prince of darkness that he hoodwinks those who do his work upon earth. And this is the reason why it seems almost child's play to wage war upon drunkenness by means of the individual "blue ribbon," quite apart from the fact (as one's Bible would show) that it is a mistaken principle.

What, as Christians, we should work for, nay, what even a civilized community, as such, should be capable of, is the closing of public-houses by "local veto," or otherwise. Some sort of a "Gothenburg System" should not be impossible in this country. No brewer or distiller, surely, would talk of "compensation." Who ever compensates other merchants when some article of commerce is superseded, as constantly happens? Brewers and distillers have had their day, and none of them will be in sight of the workhouse, even if every public-house be closed. Nay, if there were the man of conscience among them, he would ask how, perchance, he might compensate any widows and orphans of his hitherto victims, rather than suggest compensation for himself! As for the publicans, of course, they must not starve, and there is a text that might furnish the line of action—"let him labour, working with his hands." Suppose one offered them free passage and outfit to Western Canada, where such labour is still at a premium? Canada is quite able to see to her own protection from drink. In the meantime, if only one could be certain that every one calling himself a Christian in this land under present circumstances *kept clear of money derived from drink*, one public-house after another would run dry. The masses cannot so easily succumb to intemperance if less and less of our money goes towards the making of drink. But the day surely will dawn when British public opinion, educated to the level of true humanity, will break the neck of the drink curse, even as it broke negro slavery—not by "pledges" and "blue ribbons," but by a rule of righteousness.

There is, however, yet another aspect. If by means of

pledges one could get the people to starve the absorbing pockets, the battle, of course, would partly be won, but there is an influence at work in the drunkard's life, and it is with this influence the temperance worker should deal. Total abstinence in many an individual case will be a true remedy ; but its advocacy is not the true weapon when we look at the mass of the people and their hopeless drunkenness. Why do the people drink ?

I have seen a letter in one of the newspapers signed "A Scot abroad," which Scot says he has travelled for forty years in France, in Belgium, in Germany, in Switzerland, and that an unaccountable phenomenon has forced itself upon his notice. There is very little temperance work abroad, "blue ribbon" efforts having but lately been introduced from this country ; but, as this Scot says, in populous cities, and in the remotest rural districts all over Continental Europe, he finds the fullest and most frequent facilities for drinking—inns and beer-gardens at every turn—and yet he sees "nobody a penny the worse ; *drink everywhere and no drunkenness*" ; and he wants to know how this is.

We will try and tell him. The first thing to be noted is that a British public-house is something vastly different from any foreign inn or beer-garden. It has always struck me that the English or Scotch "public" is the veriest sign and symbol of that homelessness which drives the people to perdition. For its other descriptive appellation is the "bar," where a poor wretch may gulp down his glasses of poisoned stuff, making room for another victim, and then he has the street. Is it wonder that some of our streets are a nightly pandemonium disgraceful to behold ?

Has any British city magistrate ever been to Berlin ?

Then he would know, perchance, what a beer-hall or beer-garden—*alias* music-hall or music-garden — can be brought to.

I was staying in Berlin once, the guest of a Cabinet minister, His Excellency one evening taking his daughters and myself to one of these halls. We went for our recreation, and a fine selection of orchestral music we heard. It was a first-class popular resort, but I—being trained in British habits—opened my eyes wide. There sat the respectable working-man with his wife and young people; there sat the tradesman and small shopkeeper; there some University students; there also a number of soldiers, and a couple of their own officers, possibly, at the next table. The middle-class *pater familias* with kith and kin was in full force. And, at any rate, one Cabinet minister was there, moving about in the intervals of the music, shaking hands with acquaintances. A clergyman, too, I saw; why not? Yet all these people, the men certainly, drank beer—two, three, four glasses during the evening, and it did them no harm. I cannot tell what the music cost, but I believe there was only a nominal entrance fee. The industriously inclined housewives had their knitting or other light handiwork with them, the gentler sex generally having coffee and cake by way of refreshment—the cake, indeed, one might bring in one's bag, home-made, as you may in many recreation places abroad. It was all very simple and natural, a coming and going throughout the evening of some hundreds of all sorts and conditions of men. And when our party left I thought that but for some of the men smoking I had spent an enjoyable couple of hours, for the music *was* good, and one liked to watch

the people. Yet, despite the cigars, the wintry well-lit hall (one would be in the garden in the summer) was airy enough, high-roofed, and with evergreens growing along the sides and round the supporting pillars.

This was a respectable beer-hall in Berlin. I have not been to Munich—the place which consumes more gallons of beer per head than any other city upon earth, even including drunken Britain, Munich not being drunken, though it drinks; for Munich beer is not specially brewed for intoxication. It is well known that the famous Munich beer-halls count among the historic sights of the city, and can be entered, indeed, are entered, by British and American tourists any hour of the day. Apart from the police, the public in those German cities would not tolerate what is called a public-house in this country.

Yet Town Councillors, who surely ought to know better, go on licensing public-houses as if the welfare of the realm were bound up with them. Edinburgh has over seven hundred of these soul-traps, about one-half of which are public-houses proper, the other half “licensed grocers,” but these latter contrive to be almost as pernicious as the former; and that “Scot abroad,” on sending his inquiry to the newspaper, may have had a vision of “Saturday-night in the Cowgate.” London has some fourteen thousand licensed premises. What must one think but that the very magistrates, some of them, must be guided by that mammon-rule which feeds on this vice of the British nation. Could a Town Council not endeavour to bring down the public-house, encouraging recreation places instead, where the people could have true enjoyment along with a glass of

light beer, and where the force of surroundings might make for moderation, for order and decency? Which places, to be sure, must not be owned by the brewers, neither on their own behalf, nor as the representatives of private capital. Indeed, as things are in Britain, *the community were the safest owner*; or some of our Temperance Societies might be licensed, for it were right good work. You cannot kill the drink, *except by re-introducing it more wisely!** Commonsense and honesty of purpose might conquer, where good folks' total abstinence stands helpless. Aye, but public opinion is wanted to lead on our governments, which at present, one much fears, are led by the trade.

Is there none among our rulers with sufficient sense of humour, enabling him to read in advance the judgment of posterity, when a younger and brighter Great Britain from its nobler social level will look back upon this nineteenth century (a "dark age" they will call it), reading wonderingly in ancient chronicles how Britain once upon a time, though she called herself enlightened, permitted poison-factories throughout the land, indeed, conniving at their

* After the above was sent to Press we read in the papers of the taking root of Lord Grey's *Public-House Trust Scheme*, which certainly is a move in the right direction. One gladly notes that the Trust means to keep clear of "money-making," at least, above five per cent., any surplus to be devoted "to the welfare of the community"—let us say of the working classes, seeking to lessen their need of even the purified public-house. The Trust, however, will have to see to the brewing of its beers! And an effort will have to be made to bring up Lord Grey's public-houses for social intercourse to something like that Berlin beer-garden. If "the noble Earl, the Bishops, and others of the nobility, gentry, and clergy" who are concerned in starting this scheme are willing now and then of an evening to meet on a level with the people whom they would uplift, then, and then only, the result is guaranteed.

turning out alcohol-laden beers and vice-rousing spirits, though year after year the Health and Crime Returns showed the fearful havoc wrought among her people, costing the ratepayers tremendous sums, in order that some conscience-hardened men, brewers, distillers, shareholders, and the Revenue to boot, might make money ?

To be sure, an evening like that Berlin evening is not religion, it is not even intellectual improvement, and there are better things ; but it is human nature unbending innocently, it is wholesome social intercourse between the classes and masses, letting the humbler man know he is not altogether looked down upon. But in Britain—ah well, we are far too select to mix with the people, certain of our efforts for their conversion, of course, excepted. Your working-man knows that, and if he has anything like self-respect left, he resents it. The British way of keeping ourselves to ourselves may have its value, but it has resulted in a God-forsaken, drink-sold proletariat, for we *are* meant to be their “keepers.”

This is one answer to that travelling Scot, yet more. He is not quite right in saying there is no drinking and even drunkenness abroad. There are second and third-rate drink-places on the Continent, but even there the people get fair beverages—honest lager-beer and the simple wines of the country—with the result that there may be both drinking and hilarity (more, indeed, than one would approve), but there is comparatively not so much absolute drunkenness. An incapable or drink-noisy man in the street is, as a rule, rare, and the writer had to come to this country to see a woman reeling from a public-house ; that, happily, is very rare abroad. In certain parts, in North

Germany more especially, distilled liquor, I fear, takes the place of wine, but there also neither the police nor the public would stand what goes on in Britain day after day. For habitual drunkenness is at a discount on the Continent, being more rigorously dealt with than here. Yet even this is not the true answer to that inquiring Scot—the true answer is that *the people are not so debased*.

And why are they not ? Would you have me believe that the foreigner is by nature a higher type than the British working-man ? Surely not. And are we not rather coming back to the one fundamental wrong ? Is it not that the people have been deprived of all that can tend to a wholesome manhood and beget self-respect and character ? They have nothing to live for ; they see no reward for thrift or sobriety. There is but the thinnest plank at any time in their lives between mere drudgery and sheer starvation. They are a disinherited race. Driven off the soil, their natural dwelling-place, they welter in the hopelessness of great cities, a drink-degraded people largely because of this. It is this hopelessness, this homelessness, which has done it. What hope have the mass of the people in this life ? What star shining on their earthly lives to beckon them on ? And babies are born to this condition of things, sealed unto perdition by the forces of heredity before they know their right hand from their left.

Of course, if a poor struggler can keep clear of drink—and considering all the influences about him, he is a hero if he does—he is better off than his drunken neighbour. But it is an awful thing for us to lay the blame on the people ; and for God's sake let those that would help them strike deeper than even this miserable drink question. It is not

the *effect*, it is the *cause*, that needs laying bare. And if every public-house could be wiped out, the slum would still remain—that prison-house of an ill-used people. Let us work for temperance by all means, but let us first of all “love mercy and do justly” by these groaning slums. If we could but kindle a spark of hope in the poor slaves’ lives, acknowledging that we have wronged them, that we have allowed a state of things which has gradually robbed them of every human due !

If any reader doubt this let him settle for a while in any countryside abroad, where the people have a home-life and a healthily developed village life, an independent humanity of their own—not so rare a thing abroad, thank God—and he will perhaps discover some of the influences which, apart from all religion, keep a people from sinking to a mere animal level. And it is the life of the countryside which influences the populous city.

But the fact is, we have scarcely the sympathy to understand the people ; we have no ear for the cry of their life-long want. There is a gaping gulf between the classes and the masses, because, despite all Christian and philanthropic agencies, this mammon-governed country has not learned to “love mercy and do justly” by the hard-used poor.

“*If only the poor did not drink !*” Can we really for a moment put ourselves in their position ? Was it not Becky Sharp who said it is easy to be good on five thousand a year ? So it is. A great deal of our goodness simply means a good banker’s balance. Why, what temptation have we in our comfortable drawing-rooms, in our libraries, to break out into the sins and vices of the poor ? We have

only to ring the bell for anything we want, why should we not live respectably ?

Some of us do good with our money, giving away, maybe, a very large "crumb," and people say, "Behold, how good they are !" But perhaps this goodness does not really cost us anything : we have never once in our lives suffered with the sufferings of the poor, or felt with their feelings. We have our own sufferings ; to be sure we have, or think we have. God does not let us off without at least trying His faithful best for our souls ; but as for the bitter sufferings of the poor, what *do* we know of them ? How can we, in our comfortable and often luxurious houses, even faintly understand them ?

The poor most literally are suffering for our sins, our love of wealth. It is not, primarily, their own drink which is dragging them lower and lower ; it is our worldliness, answerable for much of that drink. We need the good things of this world for ourselves, and that is why the poor go to the devil. They have a right on their side, a solemn right, when they are crying out for the "living wage"—a living wage not only for earthly bread, but to lift them up to a level where they might learn something about the Bread from heaven. Let us keep our tracts and Bible-readings to ourselves—for a while at least. Let us pause a little in our comfortable houses, we who think we are feeding on the Bread from heaven, yet with our hidden mammon-worship (hidden, maybe, from our own blinded eyes)—we who say, "Lord ! Lord !" knowing that the poor are perishing all around us. What do you think the Lord will be saying to some of us one day ? "*I was a prisoner in that slum.*" Will He not say that ? "*And your mammon-love*

kept Me there!" Will He, must He, not say that? "Depart from Me; I never knew you!"

Verily, it is not only a sorrowful thing, but a judgment upon this nation, that Christianity and mammon are so hand-in-glove—that worldliness is in the Churches. Look at language itself—that is, metaphorical language—for a telling and incontrovertible bit of evidence: one can hardly listen to a sermon in this country, certainly not a course of sermons, from any preacher without hearing him go for illustrations to the very banking-house and stock exchange. How is this, but that one and all we so well understand the allusion because of our secret hankerings after the world's good things? The other day I heard a much-revered preacher illustrate the free grace in Christ, the full and free pardon, and our poor or hesitating acceptance of it, by "Someone leaving me eighty thousand pounds, and I only going to claim ten. What a fool I should be!" Why, even Luke ii., 49, has been rendered by "my Father's *business!*" a phrase which must tickle every non-English ear.

It was not without reason that Napoleon called this nation "a nation of shopkeepers." Business instincts colour almost everything in Britain, and the present writer can understand certain friends who try to make out that the British race is a remnant of the lost Ten Tribes. Surely! For, barring the Jews themselves, there is not a race keener in money matters than the great Anglo-Saxon. "Business is business," how often that is flung at one! Mammon is the god of this country, and one is sorely tempted to believe that it has come to be at least a demi-god in the very Churches. When one wants to honour any clergyman

here—say for twenty-five years' faithful ministry—how does one set about it? Is it not by collecting a "purse?" It is right to be grateful to a minister and to give proof of it; but other ways might surely be found for showing him even a substantial kindness, without lowering him to the actual acceptance of a "purse." It simply shows the standard of valuation in this country. Yes, standard of valuation—tell-tale language itself admitting of the expression that a man is *worth* so many thousands, when we only mean he has so much in his pocket. The fact is, money has become so ingrained in our life, we are past feeling the impropriety of its rule. Is not money, actual money, the reward for almost any public service? But for the Church's ministers the sort of "honour" just alluded to is known only in this country—always excepting America, which in matters of money carries the palm. I think I am not wrong in saying that such a testimonial would be thought an insult abroad. At any rate, it is well for the clergy in a less wealthy country that they have little chance of being thus tempted, lest they also might succumb. Surely Christ's ambassadors, like Gordon, should be found above such gross reward, if only as an example to a mammon-loving generation.

Then, again, is not in almost any walk of life, almost any sort of undertaking, the paramount question, "Does it pay?" How often these two glib little words, "it pays" are the explanation when one inquires into the why and wherefore of any course of action! "It pays" is the key to the economics of society. But even the Churches unthinkingly say "it pays" when they defer true growth to rapid processes, to brilliant results. Have not missions to

“pay” lest they fall into disfavour? And what is Exeter Hall but a sort of clearing-house and showroom of Christian activities, a sort of yearly striking of balance of “Does it pay?” Yet Christ worked while it was day, and was content to be what the world calls a failure, sacrifice and not success being the true pathway to Life, and there is no road-royal which is not *via dolorosa*. Why, then, do Churches seek pre-eminence? Why do they count Church members as a worldling counts gain?

Again, how it “pays” to be a first-rate preacher! Yes, and it “pays” to be a Christian. A man in this country positively gains in worldly position by being an active Church member; he gains here by a “profession,” where abroad he would have to take for himself “the reproach of Christ.” It is for this reason there are so many varnished worldlings in the Churches, wearing Christianity for a pretence; it is a terrible thing if Christianity, as Leo the Great said, is the best-paying investment! Let any reader inquire of his own conscience whether “it pays”—mammon-worship with the fair face of expediency—be not largely the rule of action for Christian and worldling alike.

This awful standard of modern Christianity! This fearful worldliness! This slyest of foxes destroying the vineyard! Surely the Churches should not be “of” the world, if they would truly carry on their Master’s work.

Having written the above, the writer felt some compunction. Should it go to Press? But she finds she is not altogether alone in the field. “Ian Maclaren” has been addressing the Free Church Assembly on the very subject of spirituality *versus* worldliness in the Churches. He, too,

points out that the Church in many of her ways is in danger of becoming a "business concern." He speaks of the "commercial atmosphere" in the Churches, showing that in the race for life they have taken a leaf out of the world's way of doing things; in other words, that the Churches have grown worldly and gain-loving. But it is not enough for a minister thus to bear witness by word of mouth, even in a brilliant speech delivered before the high-court of his Church. Where is the preacher who will in practice set himself boldly to attack this worldliness, making it his life-work (for he will not turn the tide in a day), denouncing it faithfully and fighting it manfully, not permitting its inroads into his own life that he may have a better right to resist it in his hearers' lives? Where are the ministers who do this? Is it not that the prominent clergy, the capable and influential ministers, if not in every case individually, yet as a class, are bound and hindered—yes, bound by silken cords and chains of gold? Do they not care—some of them—for this world's honour, for advancement, for the large stipend, and is there not another curious proof of worldliness in the heart of the Churches?

The writer ventures for the sake of this book's message to speak of these things. Not that they are hidden things, yet a proclaiming upon the housetops is sometimes wanted. The fact is, that a foreigner coming to this country is invariably struck with the discovery that rich men's daughters have a peculiar tendency to gravitate towards the leading clergy, in manse, vicarage, or rectory. To be sure, they are apt to gravitate towards any man of position, but should this be said of the Church's ministers?

The writer endeavoured to warn a young clergyman the other day against this snare, when he rebuked her, trying to show that it was the accident of circumstances rather than greed of possession, since a capable minister, a prominent man, naturally looked for a cultured wife, and that she was most likely to be found in the realms of wealth. *O sancta simplicitas !* But this is serious—the cultured wife with her accident of wealth. What says the Northern Farmer: “Warn’t she as good . . . as a lass as ’ant nowt ?” According to my young friend, the efficient divines, with their leaning towards cultured wives, are blameless ; it is a case of

“Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is !”

culture and wealth, where wives are concerned, being apt to run in double harness. But surely it is a very serious matter that one cannot turn anywhere, not in the world, not in the Churches, but

“Proputty, proputty, proputty—that’s what I ’ears ’em saäy !”

Was Tennyson such a hopeless cynic ? And think you when he wrote these lines he was only depicting the foibles of a farmer ?

The thoughtful reader will understand ; the wealthy wife may be all that is true and noble, the one woman in herself for even a minister to prize ; it is the miserable wealth—whether in wife or in large stipend, or both—that ill befits a minister’s household ; and not merely the wealth, but all that follows upon wealth—pride of position, the world’s honour, the blunted sword. How can a preacher freely say “Love not the things that are in the world,” when the world sees him surrounded by these very

things? It is the inconsistency of wealth in a minister which even the world remarks. And what of Christ's "If thou wilt be *perfect*?" But the true loss is in his carrying a blunted sword! How can he fitly wield the sword of the Spirit against all manner of worldliness if he permit even an appearance of worldliness in his own life? That is why the wealthy wife is a hindrance! Her wealth may not, if such grace be given, hinder her own life, nor her husband's life, and yet it is a hindrance, lessening the power of the spiritual sword. Some such thoughts, surely, must have been in the prophet Ezekiel's mind when he cried, "Woe to the women that sew pillows to armholes"; and "Wherefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against your pillows!" A figure of speech this? Yes, but what a meaning! Why will Christ's ministers allow themselves to be padded with pillows by even the best of wives? Why will they seek this world's advancement in honour or stipend? It is against their being true hunters of souls; against their truly carrying the messages of a Kingdom whose cry is ever "Blessed be ye poor!" It is the incongruity of their wealth-beguiled outward life which, in one respect at any rate, leaves them but a sorely blunted sword.

Let no one think this is written lightly! In putting forth a book's message one dare not stop half-way. I do know there are clergy, north and south, who, though the surroundings of wealth be theirs, nevertheless are pillars of the Church.* But it will probably be admitted they

* Nor must it be forgotten that there are hundreds of clergy, both in England and Scotland, doing the work of the Church upon starvation wage; but all the more strange it is that some of their fellow-labourers in the Vineyard are content to be valued at a thousand, more or less, a year.

are great preachers mainly, the power of the pulpit being a gift, maybe, like any other power of the intellect, almost despite oneself ; and the question will be, are they equally mighty in the cure of souls, turning the sinner—the worldly man from his worldly ways ? Consider the matter as you will, it is hard to see that the possession of wealth in a representative of God's Kingdom can be anything but a hindrance—a condoning of what the world holds dear. A preacher of the Gospel is Christ's ambassador, and should the ambassador so differ from the Master who sends him ? Christ and the apostles were poor. Paul was a finer preacher than any, and he was a tent-maker, refusing to be kept in ease—"not because we have not the 'right,' but *to make ourselves an ensample unto you.*"* Yet if wealth have come to a minister unsought, what a weapon to his hand ! Could he ever preach a more telling sermon than by a direct object-lesson ?

I know a man, not a minister, and not in this country, who is one of those business-geniuises born, under whose hand everything turns into gold. He makes wealth, and great wealth, almost in his sleep. But he has laid down for himself the rule, not to keep anything beyond fifty thousand pounds. Fifty thousand pounds is not penury, but in a man who could lay up his million this is fine restraint. He is still a man in his prime, and maybe his Master's Spirit now teaching him may yet teach him something even with regard to that fifty thousand pounds.

In the meantime he reasons thus : he can do more good work allowing himself, say, the luxury of first-class and

* Revised version.

Pulman-car travelling, and keeping his carriage, than if he did without the help of these things (personally, and in his home life, his requirements are simple); for he is up and down the country continually on some of those very errands for the people pleaded for in this book.

Thus also a mentally hard-worked minister cannot live upon workman's fare, but even as the man of whom I have just been speaking, if he be rich either in stipend or by right of a wealthy wife, he could surely lay down a hard and fast boundary-line, which boundary-line in a minister, or, indeed, in any Christian, never can be meant to include the things his worldly neighbour counts among the necessities of life.

The Christian boundary-line by an honest conscience can be found: its name is *personal independence*. It is right for instance, since there are but few of us whose faith is a power to trust the Father in Heaven absolutely—it is humanly speaking right, even to the length of “laying up (some) treasure,” to provide against the rainy day; for no man or woman who can work should ever require their neighbour's assistance. To keep oneself modestly “independent” by means of money earned or otherwise honestly come by, then, is a lawful instinct. The evil begins in what lies beyond. And “independence” can never mean need of luxuries. “Having food and raiment,” says Paul, to the early Christians, “let us therewith be content.” As to providing for one's children I have seen it too often that the truest wisdom consists in giving them a good education and nothing, or little, beyond; to grow up with notions of wealth is almost always hurtful.

This book is laying stress on the fact that leaders

are wanted. Surely the outstanding ministers, the prominent clergy, should be leaders! Should they not, some of them, be in the very forefront of some common work, some mighty effort, for raising the people, even if it were on the strength of bodily throwing in what "mammon" may be theirs—thus proving to the world that there *is* something in the hopes of some, that this new century shall be more of a Christ-century than the world has yet seen? Should they not, some of them, make it their strenuous life-work to lead back the Churches to their true vocation of being in very truth the "salt of the earth?"

Why do not Christian people, at least the sincerely earnest among them, go back to the Sermon on the Mount for a simpler, truer life, a more honest Christianity?

An English Bishop has said "the world would go to pieces (the whole social organism) if we all took to living literally according to that sermon." A curious statement for a bishop. Well, for one thing, that sermon is an ideal—an ideal given by Christ to a mean and grovelling world. Ideals are not realized at a bound, but ideals may fitly be striven after, fitly be openly acknowledged as the standard one fain would reach. "The world go to pieces" if we reached that standard? Surely, for then the millennium would have come. But there is a world which to the Christian should go to pieces daily, and this is the world called *worldliness*; it should be got out of our lives, out of the Churches. Christian people, though in the world, should not be "of" the world; and as the truest test of it their hands should become cleaner and cleaner of mammon. It is an ideal, but well for the man, well for the Church, that can openly strive for it.

It would mean a simpler life for one thing, would it not? Might not the Christ-*likeness* fitly wear this outward garment? Few love money for its own sake; money is power, and men love that! And they like being rich because of the prestige, the glamour of their wealth being what to a book, good or indifferent, is a glittering binding; it puts them in outward importance on a level with their worldly neighbours, it buys the world's honour for them. How even Christian people have learned to bow to the man of money! Yes, and how wealthy Christians are flattered for their "goodness," which may be real, but Christ said: "They have their reward." They *have* it! You cannot take this world's honour, though it be for your "goodness," and be equally sure of the heavenly recompense. This is one reason why the amenities of wealth are such a curse to Christians. What a wholesome thing it would be if the gospel of simplicity could find more hearers in this country. The book worth having can afford to be simple. Is any man the happier for his gorgeous surroundings? Does not the gilt wear off by very habit, and are not all true enjoyments the things to be had without money and without price? Surely the devil is but fooling the world with this love of money, for all true happiness is God's free gift, and "a man's life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." How literally true this is! Can "things" do anything for any man? I have lately come across a reading of Mark x., 23: * "How hardly shall they that have *things* enter into the Kingdom of God!" Surely,

* Suggested by the original bearing of the expression, wealth in those days consisting in "things" rather than in coin.

for is it not the love of things—things beautiful, things pleasant, earthly things, in fact, whatever their name—which holds us in thrall? This is why John says, “Love not the things that are in the world!” Do we not know there is no real greatness except in the soul’s freedom from all earthly trammels? Then should there not be some such seal on a Christian—a freedom from earthly things—marking him out from the common herd as a child of the Kingdom, that Kingdom the membership of which is ever proved by the breaking of chains? What heroes some of us might be if we more fully understood the meaning of those words, *the liberty of the children of God*.

As it is, we seem to know very little of that liberty, and that is why, Christian and worldling alike, minister and layman alike, we are in bondage to mammon. And it is this mammon-worship, *alias* love of luxury, love of position, love of self-importance—it is this worldliness, tainting all classes and every rank, which has brought the country to such a pass that (to use the Bishop’s phrase) there seems nothing left for the social organism but “to go to pieces.”

Nothing, but for Christ the Healer.

There is just one reason why one hesitates to publish these pages. How the scoffer will sneer at them. “Ha! ha! look at your Christian people; they are no better than they ought to be!” But it is right now and then to examine the secret heart, of which Paul says, “I know that in me dwelleth no good thing.” It is right once and again to lay bare the hidden sore, the cankerworm in ourselves. And if the world says “Ha! ha!” because of our worldliness,

that is the lesser evil. Keeping the sore covered up because so many, even Christian people, have a part in it is much worse. It is not Christianity which is at fault, though the scoffer say "Ha ! ha !"—it is our own poor share in it. And confessing boldly is half-way towards overcoming.

Britain is not only the wealthiest, she is also the most Christian country in Europe ; that is why mammon has invaded her very Churches, her Christian homes, where men and women almost by habit say, Lord ! Lord ! It must be so ; where there is much light there is always much darkness. The enemy of souls has need to be busy in Christian England, seeking to trap the wealthy, as he is ever trapping the hungry poor ; and *it is because Britain is the most Christian country, and the wealthiest, that she has a slum-life beyond anything to be found elsewhere.*

A missionary of long experience has assured me, and I well believe it, that nowhere in heathendom has he come upon the degrading things we allow to continue in our own Christian midst. It is dawning upon some of us that London indeed has become the centre of European iniquity which Rome once was. Rome was heathen, yet her judgment overtook her !

No book and no preaching will turn the world from worldliness ; it is its nature ; and yet it is well to put the finger upon the sore. The Churches, the Christian people even, will continue to be mixed up with worldliness, but to the few, the choice souls here and there, the Voice will say : "*If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast.*" Thou art a good man, a good woman, as the world, nay, even as the Churches go, but "*if thou wilt be perfect,*" come out of this. Have no part in it. Wash thy hands of this mammon of

unrighteousness, if only as an example, and set thyself to live as thy Master would have thee live in this self-seeking world.

They are wanted, the few wholly noble souls who *can* "see," who have it in them to come forward saying, This shameful slum-life will never be stopped till some of us, like that girl in Longfellow's little poem, will rise and say : "This slavery cannot cease unless I, for one, come out of the ranks of oppressors."

There is a story from the Roman forum of a brave heathen of old, who, decked in his choicest possessions, when the wrath of the gods had rent the earth, for the sake of the many jumped into that yawning grave. Could a heathen do this, and shall not the Christian be found, even the man of choice possessions, not to leap into any gulf, but to stand up in the Christian forum and show how the wrath of God must surely descend upon a people calling themselves by Christ's name, yet halting between God and mammon, "laying up treasures" for themselves and their children, knowing all the time that the hungry, sinning, drinking slums are the fearful mine whence half that gold is drawn ? They *are* wanted, the few righteous in Sodom, and if they would come forward something might be done !

VI.

THE CHURCHES AND THE SLUMS.

"The Grace of God bestowed on the Churches."—2 Cor. viii., 1.

It is a true sign of life that in one form and another the question has struck the modern conscience, "What would Jesus do?" What would Christ say if He came to London or to any of our great cities?" *But what if He came to our Churches!* Should we take Him to our noble monuments of Christian activity, our manifold works in His name—

"Behold Thine images, how they stand,
Sovereign and sole, through all our land?"

Suppose the parable were right—

" . . . still, wherever His steps they led,
The Lord in sorrow bent down his head ;"

And the poet-preacher spoke true—

"Then Christ sought out an artisan,
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly want and sin :
 'Lo here,' said He,
'The images ye have made of Me!'"*

o o o o o
The uplifting of the people surely is primarily the

* Lowell, "A Parable."

Church's business. Be the causes what they may, the masses are fearfully sunk, and the wound is very deep. Whence should the true healing come, the balm of Gilead, for the hurt of the daughter of My people, if not through and by means of the Churches ?

What here follows is offered as an object-lesson for earnest minds to ponder.

The Salvation Army one day were having a holiness campaign, or field day, or whatever they call it, the General being present, and I made a point of going with them through this course of meetings. There were but four in two days, but I brought away what I can only call a moral indigestion. What terrible "conversion" scenes ! But perhaps I shall do best by repeating a conversation I had after the final meeting with one of them. As I was coming away I ran in the lobby against one of those red-waistcoats, evidently of some standing in the Army, and perceiving he had a nice good face—there *are* good faces among them—I addressed him.

"Would you mind telling me what you do with these twenty-nine 'converts' you have been making to-night, supposing them to be 'converts' ?"

"Oh," said he, "we took their names and addresses, and they ought to be visited." Twice, three times he told me "they *ought* to be visited"; but let that pass.

"But this is a fearful travesty," I said. "It is more fit for a madhouse than anything else. What can you expect of this worked-up excitement ?"

"Well," he said, "maybe you are right. I have often put the question to myself. But there is some of Christ in it."

Could he have expressed it more discerningly ! “ *Some of Christ in it* ” ; but the whole a Bedlam of religion ! *Some of Christ* ; but the whole the most fearful perversion ! *Some of Christ* !

“ I have watched your faces,” I said : “ one can see there are true faces among you. Some of you must know Christ. But there are others among you—I had some near me this morning—who by their very faces and behaviour, when this excitement has a hold of them, are more fit for the lunatic asylum than anything else ! ”

“ You may be right,” said he, “ I have sometimes thought so myself ; but though we may bungle and blunder, as the General says ” (this was an expression of the General’s at the morning’s meeting), “ we try to do some good ; we —— ”

Here the pushing crowd carried me beyond this honest Salvationist. I heard no more, and went home with a saddened heart.

But seriously, now that I have seen the caricature, I know where all revivalism is wrong ! I had often felt it, yet never could get clear about it ; but now I know why I could always heartily go with any mission, even of the most honoured evangelist, just up to the inquiry-room, and no further ! I could not say, The inquiry-room is wrong ; I could not say, This matter-of-fact way of seeking to make converts is wrong ; yet I always felt that the whole of the after-meeting hovered on a boundary-line between health and disease, between the living divine and the most artificial human. Since I have seen the caricature of it in the Salvation Army I know why ! And this is called the spiritual work of the Army !

What is conversion ? We are all agreed it is a quickening into a new life, a being born again of the Spirit. Then what is this mimicry of the Army's conversion scenes but a pitiable display of human agency in the place of Almighty God ? Do they actually think that this waving of arms, this clapping of hands, this swelling excitement—so like any scene in heathen temples—do they imagine by this human mummery the Spirit which bloweth where it listeth will be constrained now, this minute, and because they have prepared a “penitents’ form,” because they draw people into it almost by magnetic force—do they think they can thus constrain the Spirit to perform His mighty work of regeneration in this or that soul ? What fearful arrogance ! but perhaps it is only ignorance.

Was not Christ seeking souls ? Did he ever seek to push anyone in this way into the Kingdom ? Did the apostles ? Shall any preacher of repentance attempt to do so who knows the work of grace ? “The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” This is “conversion”—can any man make it ? Of course, we must come ; of course, we may, we must, preach salvation, but no man can bring about another's conversion.

Yet here is the Salvation Army placing a visible “penitents’ form” in the midst of an excited assembly (the inquiry-room at least is a little more chaste, a little more modest), and there stands up a man with some singing capacity, but with utter absence of any religious reverence, beginning to lead this performance ; the waving of arms, the clapping of hands, the excited singing : “We are praying for *you* ! for *you* ! for this backslider yonder ! for that unconverted one in that corner dying in his sins !

for *you* ! for *you* ! We are praying for *you* ! ” The first “you ” is somewhat long in yielding—quite ten minutes. “Surely we shall have some first-fruits. Those who believe in the work of grace being done *now*, let them raise their arms ” (wild raising of arms) ; “we are praying for *you* ! for *you* ! ” And at last the first “you ” staggers up— a dazed-looking, homespun sort of youth, brought up like a delinquent between two “captains”—no, rather like a sheep between two colliers. But now the ice is broken, the second is “prayed for,” and the third, that conjuring singer getting wilder and wilder till the twenty-ninth comes in. Just before that laggard of a twenty-ninth the leader confessed he could go on no longer, he was quite worn out, yet “I think I have strength left for just one more ! ” Does he think *he* “has strength ” to bring in even one sinner ? Has he never been taught that some things are by God’s power alone, and not by the will of any man ?

Now, this is a literal occurrence, faithfully written down. What a fearful travesty of a holy thing ! The reader may well wonder what brought these twenty-nine ; but the eye-witness—especially if he know anything of that strange influence we call magnetism, which, rising from whatever centre, can spellbind well-nigh any sort of being—could see these victims of “salvation ” almost lifted bodily out of their seats.

I understand that the Salvationists themselves, even the “General ” occasionally, and not merely for example, but for a “confession of shortcomings,” go to the “penitents’ form.” Have they never read concerning the Christian’s penitent-chamber ? “When thou prayest enter into thy closet, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall

reward thee openly ? ” Will any earnest reader compare such an evening as the one under consideration with the heartsearching simplicity of Christ’s teaching ? and not only such an evening, but all the tendency of such unwholesome Christianity ?

Still, no one will say these Salvationists are mere impostors ; “ some of Christ ” is even in this awful travesty, yet what fearful danger !

A little girl, perhaps ten years old, in a pew in front of me was carried away by that artifice, and went to the “ penitents’ form.” When she returned after the process of conversion, she stood for the rest of the evening on a seat near me like a little maniac, poor child ! almost foaming, getting redder and redder, joining in the choruses with shrill, roaring voice, and waving her arms incessantly. Looking at her, one remembered that Christ, too, drew the little ones unto Him ; but He laid His Hands on them, and how those Hands must have stilled them ! He bade restless men and women to become as little children ; but surely it cannot be His will that children are so lifted out of all childlikeness as one saw that evening ! There were two other mites “ converted ” besides her.

That little girl very likely had a bad headache the next morning, feeling dazed and strange, not quite knowing herself ; and, indeed, most of the twenty-nine, must they not have felt the next morning as though they had partaken of a revelry ? What is all this sort of excitement but moral intoxication ? Do I not, then, believe that even a child can enter the new life ? Surely ; but oh, not in this way ! not in this way ! And yet “ some of Christ,” maybe, is in it all, “ some of Christ ’ to this or that poor ignorant

soul ; but to most of those passing through such a performance the spiritual danger must be of the very greatest.

We are not allowed to play with holy things. It is like what St. Paul calls taking the Lord's Supper unworthily—if you have not the blessing of any holy act, if there be falsehood for truth, you may have the curse, “not discerning the Lord's body.” Even the Salvationists must understand there is no playing with sacred things with impunity ; and the twenty-nine “converts” of that evening's work—what must not be feared for them, but that “the last state of that man, that woman, will be worse than the first ?” Let any honest Salvationist think of this ; they may “save” a soul here and there even by such pranks—that is, they may cause some sin-worried soul to plant his or her feet on the upward way—but to most of the “converts” such an evening's play-acting will be another step towards perdition, making it so much harder for any poor sinner to find the true way thereafter. It is a fearful responsibility to deal lightly with holy things!

But, indeed, Salvationism is Revivalism carried to its extreme, a caricature ; the roots of it are found even in Evangelism, in all that mechanical anxiety for souls which thinks it must substitute human strivings for the grace divine. There is even a physical basis for it ; it is the sheer business instinct of the nation gone mad. It is the capacity for transactions, the love of gain, running riot in religion. But no “Baal ! Baal, hear us !” will bring down the sweet rain from heaven ; no cutting of ourselves with knives ; the faith of Elijah will ; and Elijah, knowing God, knows He is not a God of any such vain and foolish show.

What, then, can a revivalist do ? What did John the Baptist do, the pattern revivalist ? “ Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand ! ” “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ”—even *your* sin. Here the “ you ” will fitly come in. And what more can, what more ought any revivalist to attempt ? True, John baptized, but it was an act of confession rather than of conversion, if by conversion we mean the spiritual change which may, or may not, accompany initial confession of sin. He did not speak of sinners being “ saved ” thereby ; there is not the faintest trace of any such view. He rather did say that the baptism of yet Another was required, even Christ’s, with fire, even the Holy Ghost’s.

Surely the Baptist was earnest enough, yet how sane and sober ! He does call the multitude a generation of vipers ; he does speak of a wrath to come, yet how sane and sound, according to him, the beginnings of the new life are ! None of that turmoil of worked-up feelings, that almost selfish anxiety for being “ saved,”* but yet something which does not come quite easily to natural man—a clean turning over of a new leaf ! setting out for a new life ! And how does this new life manifest itself ? Is it not by every man giving up his pet sin ? And mark, John required that of men before they saw Christ ; indeed, it was *in order* to see Christ ! We may infer that from Zacchæus. Reading that story carefully, it rather strikes one it was *after* he had begun to restore fourfold, at any rate, after he had begun to set out for, *i.e.*, in his heart to desire, such restoration,

* Our idea of being “ saved ” (if I may quote a clerical friend) is gene rally of getting something ; the deeper view is that it is a losing of something—a getting away from self and sin.

that he was at all able to see the Saviour, or was likely to wish for it. It was then only, after he had begun to recoil from his ill-gained lucre, conscience-urged, that he was at all inwardly fit to climb the sycamore-tree, his ladder of faith ; and then Christ, who sees every individual and conscience-born act of parting with any sin, of even trying to do so, it was then only that Christ, passing that way, said, "This day must I abide at thy house ; this day is *salvation* come to thy house," that is, come to Zacchæus. We may take this for a true reading from the simple fact that Christ did come to sup with him. Christ never comes unless the guest-chamber is ready.

Maybe that Zacchæus had been to the Jordan, at any rate he must have known many a fellow publican who had been there ; the new life was at work here and there even among these money-lovers ; we know that from the case of Matthew. Zacchæus had begun to hunger for a righteousness he had not : it was just his hunger which took him up that tree. Step by step his guest-chamber had been getting ready, swept clean of mammon-love by the conscience-searching Spirit. And then Christ came, and Zacchæus could say, "I give ; I restore !" the present tense in such case covering the past and the future.

We should have turned all this round ; we should have put some mysterious inward act first, letting the restoring take its chance. We should have required Zacchæus first of all to offer himself for salvation—whatever we understand by this ; we should require a man to feel himself spiritually converted, "saved," as we say, before we should look for his parting with any lucre. But the fact is, the true "salvation," the seeing of Christ, is a far deeper

and holier and mightier thing than revivalism seems to think.

We must set out for righteousness—a very simple and humble and, so to speak, this-worldly sort of righteousness (withal a Spirit-born thing)—before we are at all able to see Christ, even if He pass our way ! And that is why John, that pattern revivalist, wanting people to see the Lamb, strikes at the very ordinary, every-day, practical things when “anxious inquirers” come to him. He tells them, for instance, about those two coats. And shall we say he did not know the true Gospel way ? Is there anyone who will deny that if we—modern society that is—had learned that lesson, half the “anxiety for souls” might be relieved ? Would not a seeing of Christ—aye, a seeing of Christ in every hungry slum-dweller, be the natural outcome ? It would mean a genuine turning against all our mammon-worship, would it not ? A giving up of all self-seeking, would it not ? A keeping of clean hands, in fact, in all earthly walks. This is what John the Revivalist preached, and a very practical sort of personal religion it is, a sound sort of conversion. Was he wrong ? Why do we not try for “revivals” of that sort ? How many a crooked thing in this simple way would become straight—even this crooked social question ! And then, and then only, we individually, and as society, would be growing fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, which is ever in our midst, ever nigh unto every one of us. We should then see Christ, even as Zacchæus did, who is ever passing our way ; and we, too, should hear Him say, “This day I must abide with thee.” Then we should know salvation, and we should have grown into it by faith, even as Zacchæus,

who would never have climbed that tree but that he believed the Christ was coming ; rather who was hungering to see Him!

No ; our ideas of a holy thing, a thing ever beginning as a mustard-seed, and *coming without observation*, like the Kingdom itself, our ideas are a turning round of a sane and sober, though truly a mysterious, because a spiritual, thing, till sanity and soberness well-nigh are lost. Salvation is a vision, an opening of eyes, a seeing of Christ—the Gospels are strangely full of that—a seeing, indeed, by faith alone, and the incoming of a Divine motive power into a heart learning to believe—nay, teaching it to believe, causing that change of nature we call “conversion.” Then why are we seeking to make a human—I had almost said commercial—transaction, a tumult of feelings coloured by an attempt at business with the Almighty, of what is a birth, a growth ? Yet if business, why are we so little honest about it, seeking the great gain with so little of willingness to pay up our dues ? How readily we talk of the atoning sacrifice of Christ and its covering of all unrighteousness, and well we may ! But what of our part in the great transaction ? Maybe it is that though we do not object to a sort of theoretical “conversion,” to being thought Christians, we are not quite so ready as Zacchæus was to restore four-fold ; and as for John’s second coat, it is a patent fact that not even our Christian people know much about it. But the Kingdom of Heaven, to which John points his “anxious inquirers,” and therefore us, is a far wider and deeper and holier thing than we are at all likely to “see,” unless we follow his finger-posts of very practical repentance—finger-posts leading in very truth

to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

As for the inquiry-room of modern times, if it but keep to what its name indicates, if it be a place of dealing more personally with sin-convicted souls and seekers after truth, after the way of salvation ; if it take their name and address—and, to do it justice, it generally does—seeing that they be followed up with wholesome teaching, with prayer, with a waiting on God's own time of grace, then, of course, it is all right ; but if it talk of making “ converts,” if it set out for “ saving souls to-night,” then it is all wrong, and there is but one step from its earnestness to the ludicrous falsehood of the Salvationists' “ penitents' form.”

I have heard a sincere and honoured evangelist urge people, if they had not time to come to all the meetings, to come in the evening rather than for the afternoon's Bible-reading, because “ you know, in the evening we look for results ”—for converts that is. Since I have been to the Salvation Army I have understood the folly of such an invitation. We save souls, or we look for their being saved, in the evening, when gaslight and other physical influences work upon feelings, rather than in the sober afternoon. No wonder Tolstoi talks of hypnotism.

We—poor ignorant we ! *God* saves ! And He saves, moreover, in His own time and way. There are just a few things the doing of which the Almighty keeps in His own Hand, and this is one of them. How could He trust the opening of petals to the clumsy fingers of mortal man : how could He trust that other bursting into flower, the passing from death unto life, to even the most anxious

instrumentality of a fellow-sinner? We are too blind for that! All He can trust us with is a pointing of the way, and the watchman's cry, "Awake, for the Kingdom is come nigh unto you!" Surely, He is ever ready to save to the uttermost, ready even to run toward any returning prodigal, "His own time" just meaning that He will save any soul whenever He sees such soul has learned to hunger after righteousness. Then is the accepted time, and God only can discern that. The mighty change will take place whenever the Spirit *can* reach a man, and not when any Salvationist has appointed a meeting, working up a wild excitement, as though God were ever in the whirlwind, or the Almighty at the Salvationist's boisterous bidding. The Spirit does yield to prayer, but not to any such carnal importunity.

If here and there, individually, there be a true turning to God at such meetings, what does it prove but that such man or woman, consciously or unconsciously, was ready to say, "I will arise!" the Saviour of men then being more than ready, His Spirit reaching that soul by no matter what means.

This mistaken anxiety for soul-saving, as though God required just *us* for an instrument (yet—"What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" 1 Cor. vii. 16), this untaught, if well-meaning, eagerness of doing the work of Almighty God in just *our* way, which is the backbone of all revivalism, makes earnest preachers, and this is the one thing to be said for it.

And yet the faithful God honours at times even the

mistaken honest service ; one cannot but see that certain revival missions have been fruitful of much blessing to this country.

As for the Army's open-air teachings, I have listened scores of times to Salvation addresses in the streets, I have never heard anything but the most superficial talk, the most ignorant assertions, yet containing some Gospel withal. Here is a specimen. A certain minister, a faithful and honoured London worker, the other day stopped in the street to listen to a Salvation Army address, and he heard one of those well-meaning lasses declare in that hysterical way which would seem a mark of holiness among them that she was "saved" eighteen months ago, "and since that happy day, my friends, I have not sinned !" A British working man, standing by, remarked with a workman's outspokenness, "That's a d——d lie !" The minister, turning round, recognized the man—"I am sorry, Bill, you use such language !" "Beg pardon, sir," says Bill, "I didn't know you was standing here ; I wouldn't have used that 'ere strong word. But say for yourself if it ain't true ?" The minister thus appealed to could only say, "Well, I fear, you are right," and walk away with a troubled conscience, because of the teaching given to the people in the name of Christ. Yet Christian men, both laymen and ministers (who surely ought to know better), constantly tell one : "Though we cannot, of course, approve all the methods of the Army, we think *they reach the people*"—reaching the people with such poverty of teaching, as if this were not just the sorrowful thing !

On another occasion (this also on a minister's authority)

one of these lasses was overheard proclaiming the Atonement to her street congregation: "My friends, you pay a shilling a pound for butcher's meat, but here you get *Bleeding Lamb for nothing!*"

Surely, one rightly asks, where do they train their would-be teachers? where are their classes for the young? where is their instruction of their so-called converts? for this untaught religious body takes the place of "Church" to thousands of ignorant people, going to India and other countries, too, seeking to salvationize the heathen. This is the appalling thing, a very accusation of the Churches!

The above, of course, is not intended for exhaustive criticism, these pages not being a book, not even a chapter on the errors, the dangers of the Salvation Army—which are many. Nor is there any object in attacking them; that would be as useless as harmful, taking the Churches off their true work. Indeed, Christ told us to leave the tares alone. Moreover, it is always easier to attack a stumbling brother than to rectify one's own shortcomings. The Salvation Army have had a true mission in showing wherein the Churches hitherto have failed. Be grateful to them for that; only beware how you countenance them! The only true attack on any tares can only come from a replenishing of the wheatfield with the Truth from on high.

But why is this testimony, insufficient, as no doubt it is, left to a stray witness like the present writer? Why do not Christians all over the country rise to point to the wholesomeness of the Gospel? Surely it is one of the strangest things that this Army has lived to draw even ministers to

its side. But as one of the foremost of such once said to me : " We welcomed them because of the sting in our own consciences ; they came with such promises, we thought they would do the work we have left undone ! " Is it, then, because of our remissness we are helpless, though, having witnessed such meetings, we know that in spiritual things the Salvationist is but a blind leader of the blind ? Is it because the Army is attempting the social work (doing some good, this is not denied) that we, knowing the " submerged " are a standing reproach against us—is it for this reason we hold back, feeling our hands bound ? At those Salvation meetings above described sat a whole row of leading divines, like frozen prophets, not one of them rising to his feet to characterize such manufacture of converts either as lamentable ignorance or impious irreverence.

Let this be rightly understood ; one would not cast a slur upon what good the Army does—it does do some good according to its light, and after its kind ; but one points to the fearful evil clinging to that good—nay, wrapping it round, till the spiritual danger is of the most serious ! I do not doubt for one moment that the General is an honest man—so was Mahommed ; fully believing in his mission—so did Mahommed. There is such a thing as fanaticism touched with love of power—we see it in the spread of Islam, and we see it, I fear, in the spread of the Salvation Army. Or, if this comparison be invidious, let me compare them to another body—the Jesuits, under their General, Ignatius Loyola. Curious that both the Salvationists of our time and the Jesuits of the sixteenth century should have hit on the idea of distinguishing their leader by the

military term "General!" Now, the Jesuits were an earnest, even a good religious, body at the outset, and if the Salvation General is a devoted man, so was Ignatius Loyola; but with the Jesuits spiritual pride came in, seeking the aggrandizement of their order before everything, and we know what has come of it. General Booth has been heard saying in public meetings more than once he need lift his finger only, speak the word only, and any officer of the Army will go round the world at his bidding. Surely one trembles for the man who can say this. The most powerful Popes only could say as much, and theirs was a power which admittedly was not spiritual. "Learn of Me," says the true General of *the* Army, "for I am meek and lowly in heart"; and looking over the whole of the Church's history, from the earliest day until now, her true growth has never been by outward claim or display. The absolute power of one man over a body of followers can only end in that which is of the earth earthy. If the Salvation Army were wholly bad one need not here waste breath on them, for they would in that case have no support among earnest men; the real danger is that there is good among them mixed with such terrible evil.

The true mission of the Salvation Army is the passing one of calling the Churches to their post. Its very existence is a condemning of the Churches. If the Churches had been doing their duty by the masses such a growth as the Army had been impossible. *Growth?*—nay, the Church historian fifty years hence, reviewing the nineteenth century, will ascribe the Army its true nature. "A curious religious body," such critic will say, "arose in England during the latter half of the century, a strange mixture of

good and of evil ; they were an *Auswuchs** rather than a growth"—an *Auswuchs* being a growth caused by disease ; the disease, of course, having to be looked for in the Churches.

The Salvation Army, like any disease, must run its course ; it will die of its own accord. There will be dissensions among them presently ; they will split up into sects.† What good is among them will find its way back into the Churches, and the rest will die away.

Nor is it for the first time in the history of religions that such diseases have cropped up ; the Flagellants of the Middle Ages, the Dancing Dervishes of the East, the apostles of the Salt Lake, the pilgrimages of Lourdes—this, too, was and is “religion !” But religion undefiled is chaste, is pure, is sober. Can anyone imagine Jesus of Nazareth seeking the publicans and sinners in the streets of London after the fashion of this so-called Salvation Army ? Yet disease may, after all, be a purifying process. If the Church had been all wholesome, all pure and sober, such an excrescence from her body could not have arisen.

How many Salvationists are there in England—ten thousand ? or how many times ten thousand ? One has not an idea. The Army prudently does not publish figures,

* The English equivalent is an “excrescence,” yet not, somehow, as clearly carrying the meaning ; and, be it understood, a growth caused by disease is yet a *sign of life*, an organism which produces it not being *dead*.

† Witness the American “split-up,” the General’s own son having started a rival army !

leaving one at a loss to estimate their strength. They certainly are a shifting quantity, ignorant folk constantly joining them and leaving again. The poke bonnet continues, but the lasses flit. Be their numbers what they may, what does it prove but that there were so many hungry sheep which the Churches did not feed, and that they have strayed to this strange pasture. Yet poor as their present feeding must be, one is bound to acknowledge that there are those among them who even with this poverty-stricken "talent" strive to be faithful.

The General, for one of his addresses during the above quoted meetings, read the ninth chapter of St. Mark, the story of the father bringing his possessed son to Christ, saying, "I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not." Here the General paused, showing that the slums of our time were "possessed," and that one naturally would think that the "disciples" for them to come to were the Churches, *but the Churches could do nothing for them*, his inference, of course, being that this was why the Salvation Army had stepped in. And the General is right in this—he is right, most sadly right!

They certainly show activity in their social work. It is an upholding of the Army. Stepping into that social breach was fine generalship, giving the Army a new lease of life. Let them go on with their social endeavour by all means, and do what good they can, only the Churches should not look upon it as vicarious work; let the Churches arise and gather in the sheep. The Salvation Army—and this will be its lasting title to honour—*has* done what the Churches did not do; it went down to the level of these stray sheep, down to their sunken level; its

mistake was that *it stayed there*, becoming identified with the ignorance and vulgarity it sought to cure. Let the Churches go down, not to stay, but to bring back the sheep with them.

Now, while acknowledging that "good" of a certain quality is being done by the "Social Wing" of the Army, here is an example. A few years ago they opened a Women's Shelter in Edinburgh. Going over it one is struck at first sight with the cleanly provision for the most abandoned of our sisters. But then, one comes to find that these poor lost things pay twopence, or fourpence, or sixpence for the night's shelter—the latter price ensuring a boarded-off partition of a room with texts on the wall, and a washstand to one's self, which is pleasant. But at a rate of three-and-sixpence a week a woman can get quarters for herself, with any stranger, though not, maybe, with the Gospel into the bargain. The women may have cups of tea, if they pay for them ; they may cook the food they bring in by the Shelter's fire. Certain cases would be admitted free, one's humanity would do that ; and the point here is not, whether the Army is right or wrong in basing a charity on the principle of pay, the point is, Should a city like Edinburgh, indeed, should this Christian country, leave its sinning poor to the Army, which cannot possibly overtake the great need ? The General at these meetings declared that they do not now get the monetary support of the country they used to get, confessing once again to a debt of some fifty or sixty thousand pounds, on account of the social work. (See concerning "dossers," pp. 189—193).

Why does the Christian Church not find shelter for these tempted women, even as her Master would have her ?

That is the question that concerns us. I look around the country, and I see wealthy Churches—wealthy enough to pay their ministers a thousand a year. Why do these Churches leave their poor sisters to the Army? That is the question. Is it because they are so wrapped up in their own worldliness that they have neither the means nor the heart to go after the sin-beset poor?

As to these poor degraded ones, I will testify that even as it is in the matter of drink, so it is with this sin of the poor also—it is not all sheer delight in wickedness; it is often but ignorance, because no one ever taught them any better, it is often but stress of circumstance, of surroundings, and who is answerable for that?

Here is an instance in illustration—

A lady, speaking to some of these poor women the other day, said to one of them, "This is a hard life you are leading, is it not?" meaning the "hard," of course, in the evangelist's sense. But the woman, no longer in her most engaging youth, went by her own vocabulary. "Ech, leddy, ye may weel call it hard! It's hard sometimes even to pick up the few bawbees for a night's lodging. But God remembers a puir body—aye sending the money in time!" Which shows, firstly, that even such a poor woman somewhere in her darkened soul has a glimmering of an unknown God to whom her service might be due! Which shows, secondly, that in many a case it is stress of circumstance and sheer ignorance which causes them to sin. How should it be otherwise, born and bred as they were in the one-room slum? Then why do we leave these poor sinning women, cruelly sinned against by society, if themselves sinning, why do we leave them to this filth and ignorance,

unable for the most part to get even a charity lodging, except they first earn (and *how* earn!) their few "bawbees"! Why does the Christian Church not arise, ashamed to her heart's core! When one thinks of these things it is hard to conceive how any preacher of the Gospel, any servant of the Churches, can take his thousand a year, however much he be worth it, leaving the sinning poor to their fate. But the truest way of securing "shelter" consists in *opposing unflinchingly every unrighteousness that makes the slum!*

There is such a thing as example due from the leading men of a Church, an example of personal surrender; how otherwise should any Church succeed in raising a body of helpers like those serving brothers of Bodelschwingh,* willing to work for the coming of God's Kingdom without pay?

* Germany has quite an army of deaconesses—about thirteen thousand now! The brotherhoods (deacons) are of more recent growth, and do not muster so strong. Yet last summer, when Bodelschwingh told off some of his deacons to man a hospital-ship for China, he issued an appeal for men to replace them, and within a week some seventy offered. Of these, perhaps, the lesser half would ultimately be fit to become brothers, for they are sifted carefully; yet these seventy are now in training at Bethel with a view to acquiring fitness. A "deacon" is a capable sick-nurse, a manual proficient of some sort, an evangelist besides—a consecrated serving-man, in short, who can put his hand to anything. At a certain gathering of German brotherhoods they gave this testimony of themselves: "There is not one of us who could not earn his daily bread; it is not personal want that made brothers of us!" Why should the British Churches fail in raising such a body? It is one of the great difficulties Lingfield Colony has to contend with: such men at present are not to be found here. And it is just possible that for want of such workers—themselves of the people, and, therefore, understanding the people—that the Churches are so out of touch with the masses! Unless the British Churches can raise similar men, they will never get far with any social work they would do. Will readers turn to *A Colony of Mercy*, Chapter VI., concerning deacons and deaconesses, servants of the Church.

And such brothers, such sisters, *are* wanted for the Churches' social work. Let the Churches' leaders think of this; for the social need is crying out very loudly to the Churches, and who but they should be the Christ-Army taking the field?

Oh, for a Jeremiah in our time, weeping for the sanctuary, weeping for a debased and degraded people—for what lesser voice will be listened to!

* * * * *

It was Moody, of all men, who spoke the words standing as a motto to this volume. What! these slum-folk more in need of homes than of churches or revival missions? Aye. If you would win them for Christ, you must first put them where His Spirit can have a fair chance with them. And it is terribly true: *If Christianity does not do away with the one-room family, the one-room family will do away with Christianity!*

When Gregory the Great was told one day that a solitary unknown beggar had been found dead from starvation in the streets of Rome, he excommunicated himself, because such a thing had happened under his rule. For days he shut himself up in his cell, to atone with tears and penance for his sin of omission towards that poor starveling.

What will the British Churches do by way of atonement for their age-long sin of omission towards these vast masses who have "falien among thieves" under their very eyes? who in modern phrase have not "room to live!"

No one will suppose for a moment the suggestion is that the Churches have been sitting idle, the Salvation Army alone battling with the social need. That were giving

the Army a more important place than even in its wildest assertiveness it claims for itself. Yet there is one thing that cannot be denied : the Salvation Army is the only body which has systematically set itself to open fire along the whole front of slumland ; at least they are in the way of doing so, and a fine inspiration it is ! But it is the Churches' business to rise to such systematic work.

To take one example only : there is mention above of the Salvation Army Women's Shelters, and the question is asked why the Churches leave that to the Army. There is other rescue and penitentiary work besides that of the Army we know, but the plan of seeking to raise Shelters in every city, in every corner of slumland, is of the Army alone, and it should not be left to the Army ; it is the Churches' business ! And thus with the whole question. There are various admirable Church agencies for the ills of the people, and the vast array of British charities is truly a splendidly equipped force ; but for one reason and another, and chiefly because of the disunitedness of the Churches, there is no plan in the campaign, no united, well-directed action, no statesmanship, in fact.

And more : we have always known there are poor and suffering people, and hands of helpfulness have always been stretched out to them here and there, but it is General Booth who has discovered "Darkest England," the "Submerged Tenth" ; it is the Army which has mapped out, as it were, the great need, and has set itself definitely, and systematically, and with an organized effort, to meet it. It was, and is, a noble endeavour on their part ; let this be gratefully acknowledged. But it should not be left to them ; it should not, for the very

serious reason that they are a religious body, a greatly erring one, and the Churches of Britain are doing an irreparable wrong if they leave the strayed sheep of slumland to this unwholesome pasture ! This is why some prominence has been given in these pages to the doings and teachings of the Army ; it is to call the Churches to their rightful post.

The British Churches have indeed of late years given very considerable attention to the subject of this book, and many instances of their work could be cited, many noble efforts testifying to a strong sense of duty on their part to remedy existing evils. It is not, then, that the writer is unmindful of all that is being done for the sick and suffering, the waifs and strays, the fallen and undone ; it is not that one makes little of all this, or forgets how winter after winter Charity goes forth to feed the hungry, to clothe the ragged ; but one points to the need of an *organized, united campaign* ; nothing short of this will conquer slumland and bring it to the feet of Christ, healed, clothed, and in its right mind. And because this is so great a work, a work needing not only thought and wisdom and statesmanship, but a work needing *clean hands*, the writer has, in a foregoing chapter, ventured to speak so fearlessly of all that would unfit us for Christ's true work. United action alone will not suffice. It is the honest confession which is wanted, and the right sort of action will follow.

Not unaptly one may refer here to the Elberfeld System, pointing out that after all it is not more than a modern adaptation of the example set us by the early Church, those "Helpers" being but a reproduction in the municipal sphere of the *deacons* of apostolic times ! And I would

point out that more than half-a-century ago Dr. Chalmers in his Glasgow parish furnished proof that a Church can take upon itself the care of the poor systematically, and, within limits, do so with good result. I am not hereby suggesting that a British "Elberfeld System" had better be worked by the Churches; our times differ in many respects from the days of St. Stephen, and the civic conscience is a modern grace. But if the city rightly is the centre of efforts for the common good, the Churches might yield the men! If British Churches rose to their true level, British cities would not long plead in vain for an efficient army of citizen - helpers of the highest quality. It would be a hand-in-hand endeavour, promising rare success.

The Christian Church in Britain is split up into many Churches; this is a weakness, but it is also a strength. The Established Churches are least willing to acknowledge this; they only see the weakness, and it is a weakness; but out of that weakness a great strength might rise. A variety of Churches is something like specialists in science, and we know that for results in any given direction this indeed works well. But true specialists acknowledge one another, for they know that science is one. Even of revelation, and certainly of Church life, and of the work of the Churches, it holds true: "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all"; diversities of gifts, even in matters of revelation, but the diversity is in *us*! in our finite understanding! We none of us *can* take in the whole

Differences of creed, then, will last while Christian England lasts, differentiation being the nature of Church development here, and after all it is a sign of life rather than of deadness! But if the differing sections of the Church look askance at one another, if we disagree about this and that, it is that we forget that Truth is one, for there is only one God, one Christ; it is that the Churches take truths for Truth, viewing them, moreover, each from its own corner. Let me illustrate this by a story told to me in the North.

Four mariners went out to sea and discovered an island that seemed unknown, and each of these mariners came home with his own account. They had not actually landed, but had only taken the bearings of its coasts; and moreover, each of them, being in his own boat cruising about the unknown waters, had taken his own soundings and bearings. One came home saying, "It is a straggling island with many creeks." "Why, no," said the other, "it is quite compact and unbroken; I saw the coast from end to end." The third spoke of its jagged headlands; the fourth of its gently-rounded beach. And they so differed and quarrelled over their report that they rowed out again, resolved to find out all about that island. And lo! each of these quarrelling mariners had been right; each had conscientiously viewed that island, only from a different point of the compass. It was all the same island, and they should have rowed right round it before they quarrelled.

It is not urged here that the Churches should unite in matters of creed, or even of Church government; the time may not yet have come for this, and the island is almost

too large, and its coasts too varied, for present vision. But they can unite over the social question, which has nothing to do with creeds and beliefs, with Establishment or Disestablishment. After all, it is not so much "the Churches" that are wanted, but *Christian England is wanted*—Christian England to rise and do this work. It is for Christian England to join hands and be a "Salvation Army" for the uplifting of the "Submerged Tenth." And yet it is "the Churches"—the Churches dissociated from any narrow island view ! It means a larger vision, which surely would be their strength ; and if only they can find the bond of union, the hand-in-hand endeavour born of a common because national need, they can do what no mere Salvationists could ever undertake. Let each true minister work for it more and more in his own congregation, each Church looking to its neighbour Church for a strengthening of earnest effort. Confessing their sin of remissness, let them seek to be baptized with a new spirit of Christian endeavour—for *what* ? Surely, if they would honestly fight the worldliness within, the social enemy without would soon be a captive at their feet. It is only by truly working out their own salvation that the Churches can really save the masses ; this is the pivot on which all their work must turn ; this their "inner mission," and their "outer mission" will be a natural outcome. But for a mere outline of the practical work perhaps the pages of this book may serve as an indication.

Yet let us be clear concerning the Churches, or "Christian England" either : they are called upon in these pages, and the difficulty is to avoid traditional language. There is need, perhaps, of some further qualifying. Is

Christ the "Founder of the Church?" the "Author of the Christian religion?" We read that He continually spoke of a "Kingdom" which had come nigh, that He urged men to leave all and enter it—the Kingdom of God upon earth. Men by nature were earthly-minded, they were to become heavenly-minded, living the higher life detailed in Matthew v., vi., and vii., and exemplified by every act of His. Christ's gift to the world was not a new religion, new ways of worship, new creeds — He never once mentioned the word religion — but a new life. Faith according to Him was the soul's absolute dependence on God, and His one commandment was Love. Worship consisted in doing God's will. He warned men against long prayers, the spoken Lord! Lord! and once told a sin-convicted woman that the time would come when true worshippers would worship the Father neither in Church nor in Chapel but in spirit and in truth, that is, in absolute heart-and-mind oneness with God's will, and, therefore, by absolute obedience. Christ's one object was to lift men to a higher level, urging them to rise from their sin-stricken self-centred ways and live the more abundant life centred in God, the life He lived, free of care, free of sordid desires, being rich in that freeness. This was salvation. Naturally this more abundant life could only be lived if a man made up his mind to leave all that would hinder behind him—his old sins, his old self, together with the husks the world gives. "Follow *Me*" was Christ's continual advice to seeking minds, "live as *I* live!"

It is the "leaving all" which proved the stumbling-block, from the rich young man downwards. It is so much easier to adopt a system of religion, creeds, doctrines (true

enough, maybe, in themselves), forms of worship; the Christian cult superseding Jewish and heathen practices, the Church in natural transition becoming an expression of men's attempt to serve two masters—a human substitute for Christ's Kingdom of Heaven. And this Kingdom, instead of being identical with Christ-inspired lives (as Christ said it should be—for He declared it is "within you"), became a religious concept, at best an aspiration, a thing believed in, a state to be entered by and bye, since even the worldly Christian wants heaven in the end.

Now apart from all practical work, to which the Churches have lent themselves but late in the day, and which with advantage might be their chiefest religious exercise in the future, it is, of course, not here suggested that they cannot be a real blessing as places of edification where souls are built up in spiritual knowledge, schools in fact—useful and necessary schools, that is quite another matter. Our mistake is that edifying ourselves Sunday after Sunday we turn the means into an end, calling that in almost heathenish ignorance "Divine Service." God is never served except by an absolute doing of His will! Nor must it ever be forgotten that amid struggles and conflicts, and despite failings, the Church for nineteen centuries has been the "power making for righteousness" in the history of nations. But everything has its day, even religious perceptions have, and a fuller day may be at hand.

A Church's real mission, then, is to point Christians to a level beyond "Church," that level of life made so plain by all Christ's teaching, the Churches themselves leading the way. No man is saved by any faith (creed) whatsoever,

but he is saved, *i.e.*, freed from his lower self, if, beholding Christ, he believes the words Christ spoke, believes them to the length of living them.

How earnestly, how continuously Christ pleaded for converts! Only conversion with Him meant becoming a new creature, which new creature would "leave all" for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, doing so as really as the butterfly leaves the chrysalis. "Thy kingdom come," regarding the individual Christian, is not a prayer in future tense. But we Church and Chapel Christians have hit upon a compromise; instead of living Christ's teachings we sing hymns about them, the Kingdom of Heaven and its more abundant life being Scripture truth to us like the rest of our articles of faith. The modern Christian is in his pew every Sunday, quite able upon occasion, as an English Canon says, to fleece his neighbour in the market place on Monday. Yet the Kingdom is a fact still, it is nigh every hour of the day; its gates, though strait, are open wide for even the Churches to enter.

Thus, it is not "the Churches" who will conquer the slums, but a Kingdom-of-Heaven people will, if there are any in the Churches.

A word to ministers, established or free. It is faith which is wanted for the great work calling us—faith and the love abounding. Yes, and something else is wanted—a holy enthusiasm.

What can one say to kindle some enthusiasm? I have been reading how Napoleon one day stood before his guards, asking for a hundred men to lead a forlorn hope. He told them it was a forlorn hope, and that probably

every man would meet his death the moment the enemy opened fire. Yet were there not a hundred men willing to die for the emperor? "A hundred men forward!" and not a hundred men, but the whole regiment, as one man, leapt forward in unbroken line, and grounded their arms at his feet. Shall a Napoleon command such enthusiasm, and shall the King of kings, shall your country, shall the need of the people, appeal in vain? What is the Church called to be if not the King's army—aye, *Salvation Army*! She made a mistake letting that name go from her. And what should ministers be, if not the King's "guards?" Do we not know what even one man of the "guards" may do, if he be faithful, pressing forward with a holy enthusiasm, a burning zeal for the sanctuary? The social question is ripe all around you, a field of strife to be won for the Master. Shall the Churches lag behind for want of a hundred men? It is not a question of meeting death, but of carrying life. Oh, that the Christ-Army could leap forward as one man, in unbroken line—can there be any doubt of the victory?

"Up, Guards, and at them!"

VII.

THE WAY OUT.

“England expects every man to do his duty.”

“I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; I was a father to the poor.”—*Job*.

WHERE should the country's hope be found, if not in its own true people? and all are wanted—the Churches, the Laity, the Individual, the City—all who in any sense are morally fit to join in a national work of reform. And surely there are many ways of joining in any such work—many ways, but only one object! A variety of ways have been put forward in these chapters, yet the writer has not advanced any one of these, asserting it is *the* way. It may be the way—that is another thing, and it is for Britons to find out. These pages are written with just the one hope that they may prove a rousing of the national, and above all of the Christian conscience; the British people then will find its own way. Possibly the best way will be found, not by copying, that is, just literally following any one “working model” set forth either in this or in the writer's former book, but by thinking over the ideas, letting them fructify in a generous and willing mind, and working out a British system for the saving of the people.

It is the individual conscience which is wanted—this silent but unerring power influencing the national mind.

If every reader of these pages, in whatever walk of life, will but look into his own heart and conscience, acknowledging that as a people, aye, as individuals, we have sinned, *not* living up to the profession of a Christian country, what more can be wanted to open the floodgates for a national healing ?

Even by individual action the great trouble could be set right. If there are three millions of the "submerged" in Britain, are there not three millions to be set against them who might be Helpers ? Is it not true that "for every hungry one there is another who has enough and to spare ? for every ragged one another with two coats ?" And is not the inference quite simple, that these are wanted, if they could but *see*—if they could but learn what is meant by being "a brother's keeper !"

The curious thing is that even now, and in a way they ought not, they have to "keep"—by means of rates, by means of taxes—criminals, paupers, officials, because they will not learn that other way of brother-keeping which would uplift the people ; only this other way involves self-sacrifice—maybe but an imaginary one, seeing that it would end in a great national gain—and there lies our difficulty.

Yet most thinking people of this country are aware of the great need, and are casting around for a means to meet it ; they are even anxious to meet it, at a cost even, if they could but see a practical way and be sure of a real gain. For, despite any shortcomings, there is a splendid side to the British character—its love of fair play, of even-handed justice ! and this noble quality is the country's great hope. The writer is well aware that this book will have to run the gauntlet of severe criticism ; it will be accused of

extravagance, of onesidedness, of levelling tendencies, and what not. Yet if it only rouse readers to think for themselves, it will have fulfilled its mission. But indeed she, too, loves justice, and in pleading for justice to the people, she certainly would wish to be just also to those with whom she pleads. *It is not all their fault* that things are all awry ; they themselves are sufferers through existing conditions, and, what is more, they have come to feel it ! Many, even of the possessing class, are in their hearts prepared to say with James Russell Lowell :

“The time is ripe, and rotten-ripe, for change ;
Then let it come : I have no dread of what
Is called for by the instinct of mankind.”

They know that the march of history is stronger than individual shortsightedness, and they would at least not hinder a new development if they could but see the possible value of it. This book is not pleading for extreme measures ; it is only seeking to open shutters, sweeping away a few cobwebs, so that readers, rubbing their eyes, may see for themselves. And when they can see, they will act. Irreverent foreigners have a saying that every Britisher is born with blinkers, narrowing his range of vision ; if so, it is but a consequence of the insular development ; but there is this to be said, once he sees he will go straight ahead, and nothing will prevent him from proving himself a hero to his neighbours. For he does love fair play, and it is to his sense of justice one appeals. There is nothing small about the Britisher ; he can be greatly wrong, but he is also capable of a mighty strife for the right.

Take the land question only : we all know it must be settled, and "settlings" in this country are happily not by revolutionary upheavals, but by the slower and more wholesome processes of public opinion guiding legislation. No true friend of the long-suffering people would like to be unfair to present landlords ; rather it is they themselves who are wanted to take their part in guiding the evolution. Tales of landlord oppression unhappily are not rare ; if a system is wrong, there will always be individuals who cannot rise above a system ; but there are landlords also, especially among the older nobility, who their life long are seeking to make the best of an evil inheritance. Their estates, in fact, are not theirs at all ! They hold them in trust only, their hands being tied by entail. Pending the assistance of new legislation, what can they do but make the best of present conditions, seeking to be fair to their tenants, and often spending large sums on "improvements ?" We know that. But such individual efforts can never patch up a national garment that has long been threadbare, and which in common-sense had far better be replaced. And to insure that the new garment be cut out justly and fairly, and with a view to its durability, one would plead with the possessors to come forward of their own accord with the scissors of Righteousness and the thread of Mercy ; it is not the down-trodden and much-wronged people that should be the tailors, for the results would be disastrous. That is why the foregoing chapters, seemingly all one-sided, have sought to rouse the national conscience, pointing to the worst rags, and leaving the reader to view soberly the time-worn garment.

Let us refer here for corroboration to an Agricultural

Return* laid before the country a couple of years ago. It is in many respects a noble account—the condensed history of a race of landlords justly rejoicing in the appellation “good”: good to their people, and good in their estate-management. No one who has ever seen that pretty village, Chenies, can doubt that the names of Russell and Bedford must have endeared themselves to generations of cottagers. Yet here is the Duke with his confession that his vast lands, some 73,000 acres, at the end of the year leave him seriously out of pocket. Happily his Grace has not come within measurable distance of the workhouse because of this: a man to whom a goodly slice of London (city soil, too !) owes ground and even rack-rent can afford himself the luxury of 73,000 country acres, manage them splendidly, and find them a losing concern. The Duke, naturally, is ready with the usual stock arguments—“agricultural depression,” “foreign competition,” “exorbitant taxation.” Yet any open-eyed onlooker can see the real reason—the *absence of sufficient population on these lands.*

By his own showing the Duke houses on his 73,000 acres, in model cottages, 6,723 souls. Now land is a queer thing: it is practically *the* source of wealth and well-being; but it will not yield one atom of this wealth *unless it is first put into it*—and put into it every year by human toil. It is so because of the two disguised blessings the Almighty has laid upon the land—“thorns and thistles it shall bring forth,” and “in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.” It is this sweat of the brow which alone creates

* *The Story of a Great Agricultural Estate*, by the Duke of Bedford (May, 1897).

all wealth—wealth to be had to this day out of all justly-used soil.

The Duke says his 73,000 acres contain a large proportion of the best wheat-land in England. Now if his Grace were to take a tour of inspection in France, in Belgium, in Germany, in Austria, he would probably bring back with him the conviction that 73,000 acres of wheat-producing soil in those countries house and feed, not 6,723 souls, but more like ten times that number. But a free population of let us only say 40,000 on such good soil would have an aggregate of profit to show, where the Duke is out of pocket. And they would yield quite as much, indeed more than he does, in taxes* to the public exchequer—thus with their own labour providing the churches, the schools, and the rest of those good things which the Duke calls his “charities,” though these really first of all are the wealth-producers’ gift to him. In short, while by his own showing he is a bankrupt on his rural estates, such thousands of lesser owners in more fortunate countries are a thriving population, rooted to the soil.

And yet (such is human vision warped by possession) the Duke declares—p. 57—that the system of large estates not only “diffuses wealth, but retards rural emigration to the towns.” This sentence ought to be framed and hung up in London slums. The Duke also is proud that his estates yield no paupers, quite forgetting that those who could possibly furnish a quota of pauperism in connection with

* France in one year paid off the war indemnity of 1870, amounting to two hundred millions sterling ; and it is well known, it was not her aristocracy, nor yet her trade, but her people and their agriculture that made this possible.

his 73,000 acres are thronging the London streets as "unemployed." Thorney and Woburn have no paupers, because a certain unfair law of selection—sometimes misnamed the "survival of the fittest"—has been at work there till only the "fit" few are left. And his Grace forgets that the "unfit," also under a law of selection, have spread and multiplied elsewhere, the unfairly pressed city population deteriorating by inverse ratio. The proportion of acreage to population in Great Britain and Ireland is as two to one—viz., two acres to every man, woman, or child. But the great estates have sadly disturbed this; and *because* on the Duke's broad lands there are ten or twelve acres to every human being, even the newborn infant, *therefore* what is technically known as the "density" of great cities is only a few yards! And while the Duke's handful of rural estate dwellers are housed in cottages which, rightly enough, are the pride of his kindly heart, human beings in great cities, to wit, certain portions of his own London property, crowd by the dozen in one-room tenements worse than pigsties.

The Duke is a good man; will he consider this?

In fact, that stock phrase, "British agricultural depression," if really inquired into, resolves itself into the British peculiarity—land-rent: *the British farmer being the only farmer anywhere on earth, at least in any country risen from the effects of serfdom, who is systematically handicapped with rent.* It is not the English climate, trying as no doubt it sometimes is, which is the primary cause: humanity always adapts itself to its climate; and if British farmers only were on their *own* soil, they would gradually discover to what uses best to turn it.

But *the* great point is the absolute folly of the system in a national sense. If 73,000 acres of (largely) good wheat-land were not one man's expensive luxury, they might comprise a score of village communities of the kind spoken of in a former chapter,* communities of free men, sitting under their own vine and fig-tree, managing their own village affairs, and leaving a fair patrimony to their children. This is a free country, but the Duke's 6,723 comfortably-housed people are only his dependents—dependent, not on their own manhood, but on his Grace's goodwill. And this is not a state of things tending to the highest national development.

The Duke, correcting J. S. Mill, says: "The Bedfords have made Thorney." Well, land can be "made," that is reclaimed and rendered fruitful, in several ways. One could show the Duke vast tracts in Germany which in the middle ages were "made" by monks. It does not follow that, therefore, by never-ending right and throughout succeeding generations they must continue monastery property. They did for a long time, but are thriving village fields now. And land could certainly be "made" nowadays by a sensible use of the unemployed.†

What one ventures to point his Grace to is this: granted Thorney was "made" by the enterprise of a Bedford, in an age when only a Bedford's enterprise could do so; and granted that this was a measure of patriotism; it is not

* Pp. 161—164.

† See the first German Labour Colony, *Wilhelmsdorf*, in proof of this, which from a sterile waste is fast being turned—miles of it—into a garden of fruitfulness (*A Colony of Mercy*, Chapter IX.); indeed, most of the 29 German colonies can thus be said to "make" land at this very moment.

patriotism now at all cost to cling to an estate which by reason of its depopulation no longer can pay its way. In a case like this, and by the owner's own good sense, those bankrupt lands might be turned to a larger use. Forego all idea of "rent" (which apparently, as it is, is "disappearing" — pp. 2 and 49 of the Duke's story !) set to work wisely to populate Thorney—not, of course, with dependents, but with a well-selected Own-Home people, aiding them honestly to pay their way into freehold—and see if fifty years hence these same lands will not furnish a different tale. And what is true of Thorney would be doubly true of Woburn—also now, says the Duke, an estate which "does not pay its way."

On the face of it, then, some of the great British landlords are wanted—the good ones especially are—to take their part towards solving the social trouble.

The Duke of Bedford has laid his case before the country with a noble frankness ; how many of his peers have a similar tale to tell ? It is pathetic and intensely instructive that one of them, lately departed this life, should have naively summed up his will with the words : "God save agriculture !"

Yet not only the landlords are wanted, but the lordly labour employers—the mill, the mine, the factory owners. How vainly the people seek to right themselves ! Look at the great strikes. Of course, the strikers are often wrong—or can easily be called wrong. But is there no hope that in the progress of nations the time should come when the workers in a humble way may be part-owners ? How much discontent and bitterness of spirit would be nipped in the bud if the great employers of labour—while entitled to

the chief gain, which is their due, not only because the capital is theirs, but because the moving force, the responsibility, the anxiety, and the risk are theirs—could contrive some arrangement with the men, allowing them something of a percentage on the prosperity of the works in addition to the actual wages, which would thus become a minimum of earnings. What a healing power might not be found in such a simple expedient ! And it would not ruin the employer, taking up but a minor portion of his wide margin of gain, just according to his own prosperity, while he would be richly repaid by a new zeal and fidelity on the part of the workers. For what a feeling of equity would come over the working people ; how they would perceive that one strove to be fair, looking upon them as fellow-workers rather than as tools ! Would not content take the place of bitterness, would not a spirit of solidarity grow up, a sense of weal and woe in common, which surely is a human due ? At present the workers in any great concern are simply “hands,” as if they had not even a thinking head, still less a living soul. This may have done hitherto, and badly enough ; it will not do for the future ; the “hands” must become fellow-workers, the nation something of a commonwealth, which need not mean a republic, nor “equality,” still less nihilism or anarchy. The text for this was given long ago : *If one member suffers, all suffer.* Could not great work-owners strike out for such a line of business ? At present they are more like slave-employers than anything else, gathering wealth by the sweat of their people.

“Profit-sharing,” of course, is no new idea. Mazzini already advanced it, and for a practical example, showing

it can be done with triumphant success even, turn to the delightful life-story* of that public-spirited Frenchman, *Edmé-Jean Leclaire*, who, himself risen from the ranks, not only left behind him an eminently flourishing joint-company of workers, the *Maison Leclaire*, of which he was the founder and life-long head, but who earned for himself the honourable distinction of being the "father" of profit-sharing. Following his lead, profit-sharing has been tried in this country also, and if not with equal success, it is not Leclaire's principles which are at fault! The *Maison Leclaire* is a bright and shining example of what can be achieved, not despite, but because of, its principle of admitting the workers in a sense—nay, in a very real sense—within the sacred precincts of "partnership." Perhaps some of our great British work-owners will try again, and show it is possible in this country also to develop a successful business, while every efficient workman participates, fairly, of course, in the toil-earned profits.

And I am able to direct the reader to another bright and shining example, my informant being one of the workers for the people's welfare in Germany, who upon a recent occasion formed one of a Committee of Inspection going a round of visits to various notable employers of labour in various countries, in order to study the condition of the employed. And they found that the palm out and out must be awarded to a certain Yeast and Spirit† Factory, Limited, near Delft, in Holland, the Director and founder of which, J. V. van Marken, in the course

* To be found in Gilman's *Profit-Sharing*, published by Macmillan.

† Spirits used for factory purposes and combustion, the distilling forming part of the yeast-making.

of some thirty years not only has succeeded in securing for his shareholders figures unheard-of (there have been years yielding thirty, and even thirty-six per cent.), but in doing for the men what would seem well-nigh incredible along with such dividends. But, indeed, he declares in a pamphlet lying beside me that he is able to do so well for his shareholders not despite of, but *because of*, considering his men first, or, at any rate, admitting them to equal rights with the shareholders. He says that though the shareholders give their money, the men give their work, aye, often at the risk of their life. He says the solidarity of capital and labour is one and undividable, the motto of that factory being: "All for the factory—the factory for all."

It is impossible in a few lines to give an adequate picture. Suffice it to say that this factory's first care is to insure its people against sickness and towards old age, the factory paying the premiums. Yet this leaves the men perfectly free to leave the works any time, not, therefore, losing the benefit due upon their years of service; van Marken aptly remarking that if this system of insurance could be adopted by labour employers generally such a thing as distress among working people would become unknown.

Then he has hit upon a plan of paying premiums to the men upon the yeast produce in proportion to the raw material, over and above a minimum of production laid down; this resulting in a surprising gain to the factory, one third of the value of which gain going to the men in rewards.

Again, he has actually good behaviour wages, rising from a settled minimum. And there is no arbitrariness, a man's due being fixed by a Council, in which the employed

are equally represented with the employers, to which Council—a sort of Parliament—indeed every question is referred, whether it concerns the advantage of the factory and its owners, *i.e.*, shareholders, or the welfare of the men. Socialism in very fact and deed

And how flourishing a place, how thriving a community, how brotherly an arrangement, van Marken's own comfortable villa and the men's pretty little houses—quite a village—being situated in the self-same beautifully laid-out park, a kingdom indeed. There is everything to make life pleasant to the workers—concert-room, library, gymnasium, a kindergarten, classes for growing boys and girls, cooking and needlework instruction, stores and playgrounds, and what not. Nor is the lesson of thrift forgotten, the men cheerfully putting by every week a given proportion of their wages in the factory's savings bank, which proportion in the case of young unmarried men is as much as fifty per cent.; these savings being available when they marry, or thereafter, as family claims may urge.

And most marvellous of all, yet not marvellous, is the love binding the workpeople to the employer and, therefore, to the factory; no wonder these shareholders are well off, van Marken quietly explaining when spoken to concerning the factory's prosperity—"Well, you see, the more I do for my men, the more they will do for me." Surely, nothing after all is more foolish than dead self-interest.

Port Sunlight (see *Century*, December, 1900, and *Illustrated London News*, October 15, 1898) must be mentioned here—the Industrial Village of the Sunlight Soap Co., Lever Brothers, Limited, which for its thousands of working people has everything the Delft factory has as

regards housing, or social and educational benefits, but *not* any "profit-sharing" in wages. A right beautiful place Port Sunlight is, Messrs. Lever's idea being "prosperity-sharing"! They tell me: "The rents are not fixed on any investment basis, *only covering rates, taxes, and repairs.*" This Co. is but young as yet, having attained its astonishing success in 14 years; perhaps it will rise to a full profit-sharing when its work-people—now being "attached to the factory's interest" by such real beneficence—begin to need provision for old age.

But why have we not many "Port Sunlights" in our prosperous industrial realm! Might the honoured head of the chrome works at Shawfield, should he read these pages, not feel invited to take the lead? To the present writer his trouble* has been the final proof, if further proof she needed, that nothing that has been said in these chapters can be thought superfluous. There have been certain improvements at Shawfield since those lamentable revelations, but the place has not therefore become a bright and shining example. Indeed, this is scarcely possible in a factory which *can* only be carried on to the detriment of the workers' health. The question then is, Should a Christian soil his hands with such manufacture? Should he, if the chemical in question be a requisite of trade, not rather leave it to the man who "knows no better," the not-Christian? We all agreed with the central lesson of that rousing book, *No. 5, John Street*; but in what way is Sir Marmaduke of the rubber factory more in error than the noble owner of Shawfield? Such factories, if a public necessity, should be the property

* Shawfield having been made the subject of one of the "White Slaves'" pamphlets.

of the community, and should be worked by relays of men at double or treble wages, *i.e.*, by gangs serving temporarily, as a volunteer soldier does, for a longer or shorter period, and not by the dregs of the labour market, who must either starve or earn their meagre bread in such death-traps. The commodity in that case need not become more expensive, for the community would run such works as a public trust, and not for individual money-making. As a civilized country, let alone as a Christian people, we must arrive sooner or later at some such solution. This is the real lesson taught by the Shawfield episode.

The following comes from America :—*

“Christianity is something more than a gospel. Christianity is a law, as well as a gospel. . . . This Christian law, when it is faithfully preached, will make short work with the theories of materialistic political economy. It will cause the employers to understand that their wills do affect the condition of the workpeople; that they are bound to consider the interests of those by whose labour they make their gains—actually to love them as themselves; to use the power which capital and intelligence give them, not merely in seeking their own prosperity, but in ministering to the welfare of those nearest them. It will enforce the doctrine that wealth is a trust, and that business capacity is a trust; that both are to be used with a solemn sense of responsibility to God: and that the first obligation of the employer binds him to the people in his employ. What he can do to increase their welfare, to make their homes happier, to encourage provident habits among them, to open the door of hope to them, to increase their self-respect, and develop their manliness, he is bound to do. They are not his natural foes, to be battled with and beaten down under the stern law of competition; they are his allies, his associates, the helpers of his prosperity, to be cherished and befriended, and bound to him with hooks of steel. In deed and in truth they are his

* *Applied Christianity*, by Rev. Washington Gladden. Pages 169—171.

business partners ; and it is only right that he should so consider them, and, therefore, identify them with himself in his enterprise, letting them share in his profits, and making their reward depend, in part, upon the abundance of his gains.

All good Christians believe, of course, that they ought to love their neighbours as themselves ; but there are many among them who need help in answering the question, " Who is my neighbour ? " The idea that the operatives in his factory, the brakemen on his freight trains, the miners in his coal mines, are his neighbours is an idea that does not come home to many a good Christian. He has been told that the law that governs his relations with them—the only law that can usefully govern his relations with them—is the law of competition, the law of supply and demand. . . . So he has been instructed. Over the entrance to the thronging avenues and the humming workshops of the industrial realm an unmoral science has written, in iron letters, ' All love abandon, ye who enter here ! ' If beyond those portals is pandemonium, who can wonder ? The first business of the Church of God is to preach that legend down, and to put in place of it : '*Your wage-worker is your nearest neighbour.*' "

Lord Overtoun is a prominent man in Scotland, taking a leading part in Church work, in mission work. But Shawfield is a fact. Surely it is the good Christian employers, in Scotland as in England, who will come forward before all others when it is a question of transforming the wage-worker's life to the honour of Christianity.

It was contended during one of the late coal strikes that the miners earned very fair wages ; so perhaps they did, for the hardest work the human toiler can do ; they were fairly paid, as wages go ; but these toilers, every one of them, knew that the colliery owner clears a vast fortune every year, besides being a great landlord elsewhere. It is this which causes the fearful bitterness ; miners are but human. And some of these toilers have read books and

looked into histories, and they know how these enormous private ownerships have come about. They see one man almost choked by wealth, while hundreds and thousands who year by year create wealth are just the toilers and moilers, ever hungering for, and never attaining, some of the good things which God certainly has meant for them also. Do you imagine the ideal uses of life are for the few only, and is it wonder that some of these workers gnash their teeth ?

Now this is "Christian England" ; we are supposed to be moving towards better times ; there are those who contend that the world is improving, that the race is learning to "struggle for the life of others." Would to God it were ! Leaving Christ's rare heroes out of count, where is the man who does ? An excellent individual here and there, as we have seen, may do a little of this sort of "struggling" ; but as for the race, that mammon-governed world we live in, the struggle is all for self. And the one hope is that self may be driven along the upward road by discovering that the true interests of the country, and, therefore, of self, demand a prosperity that looks away from self. We have reached such a state of things in social development that the only chance for a further development that shall not be destruction lies in learning the social lesson "No man for himself !"

We are on the threshold of a new century. It will be the century of *Socialism*—which need not mean anarchy or equality, or any of those bugbears frightening the timid in the twilight of a coming day—but simply an age of Social Reformation, bettering the social organism, even as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries found their mission in

bettering Churches and creeds. It may mean and ought to mean Christ's Socialism, which is summed up in these words, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*, which, if it means one thing more than another, surely means that self-seekers cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

What are the centuries but the march of man's history towards the perfect day ? And this history cannot be hindered in its flow any more than the great tide can ; there are determining causes, and these we can seek to influence. Now, by all the signs of the times, and because of causes already become history, "Socialism" will be the mark of the coming era ; it behoves us to seek to conform with it. We cannot arrest the coming tide ; but we can prevent its being a disastrous tide if we will but act wisely, generously, sinking self in the nation, if we can. It is good, at times, that one man—individualism that is—should "die for the people."

What, then, really is wanted is that larger citizenship to which personal advancement, or personal gain, is neither the most important nor the most desirable thing. Let us say then : we *do* want to help the people, and, indeed, some of us are eagerly casting about for remedies. Here, then, is yet another suggestion for the three millions who could be Helpers, yet another working model, even an inspiring light.

One day a pamphlet reached me in which I found an article concerning a plan worked out some years ago in one of the lesser countries across Channel ; indeed, so splendid a scheme that if so far it has not attained the fruition one would credit it with, it must be for reasons which are none

of this book's business. It is nothing less than a *General National League of Help* ! Let me sketch it.

Such a League would not be a society, but rather a gathering up of societies into one national effort, having its branches all over the land. Any community or body of workers could join, remaining free, otherwise, in their own local endeavour. It would not seek to lessen public responsibility, nor, indeed, the individual responsibility of any city or parish ; but it would be a union of responsibilities, gathering them into one equalizing and not overlapping whole. It could have associates in private individuals to any number all over the country, and through these would have an eye on all beggars, on all labour-seekers, on all loafers and discharged prisoners, on every tramp on the highway. It would have to be sufficiently recognized by the authorities to be effectively backed by them in any effort for the suppression of professional vagrancy, and all begging, under whatever disguise or plea ; while, by its own exertions, that is by its labour agencies and the personal interest of its members, it would open up channels of the only kind of help that can lastingly benefit the poor. For its special care would always be the deserving poor, the honest work-seekers,* those "unemployed" who need nothing so badly as the strong grasp of a friend for their true uplifting. But the old and infirm would never be forgotten. It would look after orphans and neglected

* Is there anything more pitiful than that a man, a woman, our brother, our sister, must entreat us, and often vainly, for the privilege to work ! the privilege of spending hours of hard labour day after day just in order to live ! The bitter cry of the true "unemployed" must wring the very heart of God !

children ; and most strenuously would it look after the youth of both sexes, the apprentices, the factory girls, seeing that they are properly used ; it would look after the criminal youth, too, gathering them into Training Shelters before it is too late. We have some of these things now, but judge of the beauty, the absolute gain, of having all these endeavours gathered up into one *national* effort, one united League of Help ! As a suggestion it is magnificent, and why should it remain a suggestion ? The idea of it is so splendid, so fruitful, why not plant it at once as a promising seed, letting it grow and develop in our own British soil, and along our own British lines ? If you come to look at it it is the simplest of all things, so natural, too—just a joining of all willing hands, of all generous enterprises, carrying us back again and again to the central idea of these pages, that the true *élite* of the country, singly and unitedly, is badly wanted !

Clearly, Britain needs *such* a Salvation Army—something broader and larger, something more nationally British than the body which goes by that name. They, and they alone, in the strength of true citizenship, could save the country. Will they be found ? Will they come forward, taking that saving in hand ? It is so very hard to give up our much-cherished individualism, even our individual charities, which are legion, for the sake of a great freedom-filled, yet hand-clasping, British National League of Help ?

Such a League would mean something quite different from all our hitherto charity-work, yet nothing new—an old acquaintance with a wiser and kindlier face. Its main characteristic would be simplicity of organization ; its secret of success a set purpose and unfailing thoroughness ;

its guiding rule, loyalty to every downfallen person. Its members would be everywhere—men and women, each of them a brother's or sister's keeper; its bulwarks, its sources of power and means, the Churches and Cities of the land.

It could be started to-morrow.

Such a League would need no cumbrous central office, certainly none in authority over its multitudinous branches (a central or general information bureau being another matter), and it had better have no central committee, else it would only degenerate into another "society," the like of which we have too many already; also no president, unless Christian public opinion can be trained to preside! It would issue no yearly Report, not what we now know as Charity Reports—its good report would be the improved condition of the people, wherever it were at work. But it would hold an annual gathering, a kind of "folk-thing" (according to the true meaning of this word) for workers to meet and exchange experiences—a sort of "Keswick" of true charity and common-sense.

Such a League would not weaken any Church, need not extinguish any of our thousand and one charitable agencies; but it would gradually transform them and be their bond of union, adding a wealth of knowledge to their individual strength, absorbing them in a sense, but not suppressing them. Only last Sunday I heard a clergyman declare that there was more than enough of charitable resource in this country, *if only it could join hands!* That the Churches among them had more than enough of active helpfulness to uplift every downfallen one, *if only they could combine!* Truly, there is a wealth of charity, a wealth of liberality in

this country spending itself daily in a hundred efforts ; but the result is not equal to the powder spent.

Surely, then, what is most wanted for our national regeneration is not some new and startling thing, but just a UNION of these manifold forces, transforming them into one united power for good, and nothing—no, not even a social question—could stand before it.

And, verily, it is the true Church only, the Christ-Love transforming human hearts, that is equal to it—a Christian Apotheosis of Patriotism.

Who, then, will take the lead ? What city, what community, what Church, will earn for itself this crown of Christian public spirit ? It is not the writer's suggestion—at least, not more than an adapted one ; it is a message, a "Go and do this," gathered from a source of inspiration abroad. It is an Elberfeld Civic System, nationally enlarged.

The country is full of birth-throes, all sorts of projects and efforts moving and groping towards the solving of the social question. Only within the last year or so three or four fledgling associations have been added to the list of "societies," far too large already—associations seeking to grapple with the very objects of this book ; for, surely, the times are ripe. But it is not another society that is wanted, or that is likely to do the work — not what we in this country have come to understand by a society. What, indeed, is a society, what are many of our philanthropic enterprises, but the British business instinct dealing in charity ; it is time to recognize this and look for something more broadly human. A society ought to be an active band of workers—workers, not subscribers, but *l'état c'est*

moi—a society largely means a secretary in office. Of course, there are exceptions, but as a rule the secretary is the society with a more or less efficient committee to back him; and to give them a proper halo there is always an Earl of Fitz-Brains, K.G., or somebody representing the landed interest, who kindly accepts the presidency.

This outward show is adopted for the getting in of subscriptions, the Britisher—even the downtrodden Britisher—valuing nothing like the sight of a lord. Indeed, we are all more or less flunkeys in this respect. Yet, what is this running after rank but another species of mammon-worship? Even the Salvation Army, which surely is plebeian enough, has learned to follow suit, apparently quite unable to disport itself in the Albert Hall without, at least, a couple of titled folk to support it.

Yet most certainly their Lordships are wanted, and for something better than this acting the part of lay-figures in the realms of charity. It may be taken for one of the most telling proofs that an aristocracy is a true factor of national development, that most of us in our hearts have to plead guilty to a secret admiration for our coroneted worthies, even an affection. What leaders they might be if they but understood their true privilege! What influences they might be! And are they not by very birth called to prove themselves the nobility?

If that unwritten law *noblesse oblige* ever had any meaning, it has one now in the dire needs of the nation.

Historically, aristocracy has had its day—is still more or less having it—the people, in due course, must have theirs. This is not a mere tenet of democracy, but simply a probability of national evolution. A class which through

the less enlightened centuries has stood apart as a lording class, fed and supported by the classes beneath (as always is the case in the lower reaches of national growth), must, as these classes attain their own fuller development, needs give way to a larger civilization, and its one true chance is to be re-absorbed in the nation. In Britain the younger members of the aristocracy, as it is, are always being re-absorbed in the nation ! And let the land question once be settled, what room is there for an outstanding aristocratic class ? What, indeed, apart from possession and a few noble families excepted, does aristocracy even now amount to ? Are peers not continually being created, the man who has amassed a fortune being the most likely candidate ? Let us look at things as what they are, and not what they seem. Aristocracy, in the old historic sense, already is well-nigh dead and gone, and the day surely should come when "aristocracy" must mean *personal fitness* ; "nobility" *personal character*. At present we are so poverty-stricken in our snobbish appreciation that not even culture or genius constitute the so-called "upper classes." That vulgar thing, possession, does ! We, indeed, talk of "birth," but it only means being born to an estate or to a fortune. There is scarcely one among us who does not judge of men and women by their clothes, such tinsel-guided creatures we are ! The day surely should come when the soul will triumph over the body, when those only whose lives are a true reflection of the Christ-life will, by spiritual ascendancy, be first in a Christian land. Not receiving (possessing) but giving is blessed, says the Master ; not being lords and landlords, but the servant of all ! This is true Socialism. Say you, this will

be the millennium? It is neither more nor less than the aim set before us in social progress. It is the "perfect day," and no doubt as yet afar, for a nation's growth is step by step, but to seeing eyes it seems plain that the seething troubles known as the social problems only mean that a point has been reached for some new development, some national upward stride towards a higher level. Would one not, then, rather guide a social evolution, aid a new birth, than be driven out of one's strongholds of self-importance ignominiously? Would one not rather be in the van of a coming era than be left high and dry on one's vanishing* possessions, a fossil of the past?

Is it altogether hopeless that one of these born lords and landlords, having the brains, and, perchance, having the heart, should recognize the drift of the times and make himself the champion of a new era? It could not be done without some sacrifice, some personal surrender for one's class, but it is through sacrifice that heroes climb into the national pantheon.

It is certainly a thing to be noted by every thoughtful person, no matter of what political or any sort of "views," a thing to be pondered over, how this social question is overshadowing all minds, how we all feel—some more clearly, some more vaguely—that the vanished century is the threshold of a new order of things. The times, indeed, are more than ripe, and matters everywhere have come to the bursting point. Believer or unbeliever, the conviction is largely gaining ground that we are approaching some

* Witness that same "agricultural depression" as a proof of the "vanishing possessions," as many a noble landlord can testify.

new social order, a new dispensation, and there are those who in the falling shadows begin to look for the Second Coming of Christ. But Christ is ever coming, ever standing at the door, and surely the one solution wanted is that a Christian nation should more fully let Him in. That will be the solving of the social question !

"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

"One is your Master, and all ye are brethren."

When we shall have learned this, Christ will indeed have come.

And the social question will not be solved by governments or democracies, but by an individual spelling out of the old lesson, and those only who can set themselves to this personal task will be the fit members of any national League of Help—charity in very truth beginning at home !

Britain, surely, still has her "seven thousand" who have not in any sense bowed the knee to mammon, who will understand the deeper pleadings of these chapters for the saving of the nation, for leading it back to a more worthy social life. Sometimes, when things have gone very bad with any nation, the Lord God Himself arises, speaking by means of some national calamity, which forces even the scoffer to bow the head, which forces the people to say, as a people, "We have sinned !" Such experiences are strewn over the pages of history. Shall we wait for such a rising of the Almighty ? Do we not know that things are wrong, terribly wrong, all about us, and that some sort of a social evolution is wanted to set them right ?

And how should we move forward except along some path of righteousness ? It is for this one pleads with all noble souls, for they are the people who *can* "see."

No, not some new society in the conventional sense, but a new spirit sweeping the country, taking possession of our Christian workers—in a sense all should be workers—and gathering up our activities with a well-recognized common aim. It would be a true Home Mission. Why should not such a thing be possible as a Free-Masonry or Knight-Templarship of the Kingdom of Christ, of which we all might be members, all working for the coming of that Kingdom ? If we could clearly set such an aim before us, both Christian worldliness and starving slumland would be doomed.

It is strange that one can scarcely ask such a question without running risk of being set down as a visionary, and yet we are very certain we are a Christian people !

But if we cannot yet fully rise to an altogether unworldly citizenship of the Kingdom of Christ, we at any rate can be good earthly citizens, we at any rate can be good Englishmen, good Scotchmen, and even an Elberfeld System (to return to our starting-point) would be a wonderful thing towards healing the wretchedness of our cities—such a simple thing, such an economic, kindly and humane thing, so wise, too ; and having the example demonstrated in those foreign cities, surely it is not in any sense beyond us to follow, working out our own system along similar lines.

It would be the inner circle—each city for itself ; and for an outer circle, for a broad national endeavour, what could be more promising than an honest League of Help

embracing our many societies, thereby cutting down our expenses by one-half, nay, by a good deal more very likely, while certainly more than doubling or trebling our results—a League of which everyone would be a member who can hold out the helping hand to a struggling brother. If such a League really took root in this country—and why should it not?—it would be nothing less than a rejuvenescence of the Churches, making them doers and not hearers alone. Every minister will tell you it is possible. For aim, it is scarcely more than what the Salvation Army is attempting, as we have said, nobly attempting, but for inner reasons is not equal to. But Christianity is equal to it! It is possible! And it might prove the common battlefield to unite the Churches.* As for centres, why every Church could be a centre, no offices, no newly-to-be-appointed secretaries are wanted; the Churches are a machinery all ready to hand. Nothing is wanted but to recognize the common—and, therefore, uniting—aim, leaving jealousies behind, and rising to action.

Such a League in truth would only mean our identifying ourselves as Britons with the precepts of our individual—or shall we say our long-professed, religion! The great need is calling—the cry of a perishing people, and shall we not rise? Could there be a truer, or more promising, civic and national enterprise on behalf of our fallen masses than one carried on the shoulders and

* A certain crafty schoolmaster once reconciled two boys who would not speak to one another by setting them down to their porridge with one spoon between them. If the social problem is the dish of porridge, the Churches' one spoon cannot be far to seek—their common duty!

rooted in the heart of every professing Christian in the land? The phrase "Christian England" then would have a meaning.

Such a true national League of Help would find plenty of work—work, too, which no individual effort, no individual Church or lay agency, can fully cope with; it would for one thing have to set itself to educate the masses—always taking for granted that our own better education in Christianity is not lost sight of! Something more is wanted than even the most exemplary board-schools; that is wanted which trains a people in discipline, the road royal to self-discipline. We have not got it in this country—not as a national possession. Britain will never bend the neck to the foreign military system, and she is probably right in this; but look what that system does for the masses, how it teaches them the one great lesson of obedience, of discipline, in short.

The military system does something else; it indirectly educates the nation, since every man above the very poor, who is not absolutely deficient, and even, maybe, the humble working-man's boy, strives at the age of seventeen to pass the examination, which frees him from the irksome two or three years' service, admitting him into the army as what can only be called a gentleman soldier—a *Freiwilliger*—on the short-term drill at his own expense. But that examination is pretty stiff work, including mathematics and classics, fully equal to the British matriculation standard. It is not said, of course, that every working-man reaches this level; the middle-class all try for it, and the education so freely at work acts like a stream suffusing the country. See, then, what that does for a people, as a matter of

national improvement ? And this being so, do you wonder that the German working-man, even if in his ill-advised risings against the oppression of capital he does turn a social democrat, never *can* sink to the level of the British "submerged ?" However deep into any mire he individually may sink, he never sinks into that abject want of manliness one has to do with in British loafers. He is a different being ; he has known training and discipline.

The other day two stray German beggars appeared in Edinburgh, going a round of the German residents ; they were absolutely penniless, spluttering Socialism to any who would listen ; ragged in the British sense they were not, though they asked for a pair of boots. They had been to the Cowgate and Grassmarket, and their virtuous indignation was instructive, only so very amusing. "What a country !" said the one. "Thank God we have not come to *that* ; we haven't a penny, poor downtrodden chaps as we are, but we are gentlemen," said the other. They were castaways in the German sense, but they felt "gentlemen" in British slumland. And this is due to the fact that, whatever they were, they had known discipline ; they had had a training somewhere, leaving an indelible mark on their being. How much easier to uplift such a sunken mass ! Someone, with that inbred habit of some of us to speak up for the absent, said to these beggars, "But you must remember a man is his own master here : this is the country of freeborn Britons ; they would never tolerate your paternal arrangements." "A fig for your liberty !" said these beggars ; "British liberty for the people means *liberty to starve !*" They had learned this in British slumland !

Now though the difficulties here are of the very greatest, it is never too late to mend, and a national League of Help—for one thing, for one of many aims—could do a noble work surely in attempting a training of the masses. And since they could never really be trained in these slums—not, at any rate, in true manhood, in true humanity, which requires elbow-room to start with—the real end is obvious ! This nation, surely, owes to its people an effort in true national education. It is possible, however uphill a task. Why not start workshops all over the country ; farm colonies, too, for the teaching of agriculture (it would not cost more than keeping criminals and paupers), to take in hand the raw material, the youth of the slums, for a training in industry ? That would be something. Even a schooling in industry is discipline, is self-culture, is education, making it a little more difficult for any individual to fall into that mire—the habitual loafer. Is there no work for them ? There is no complaint more common than this, that if you have any odd job, it is the most difficult thing to get any man to do it for you. There is work ! And in proportion as the people were improved, work among themselves even would increase. While I see human beings huddle in beds by the half-dozen, you will scarcely try to convince me there is dearth of work. There is at any rate a crying need of bedsteads all over slumland, and some of those millions—the working man's earnings—which are now swallowed up by brewers and brewers' shareholders could pay for them. No, not dearth of work, but dearth of charity, of common-sense, and true economy. Nor is coercion needed, for the people are crying loudly for a living wage. And if we have succeeded in bringing children

to board-schools, why should we fail to bring the rising youth to industrial or agricultural schools ? And since work means wealth, the nation would be a clear gainer ; and one might be spared perhaps in future that painful sight on any British street of youths and men, hale and sound, idle in life's market because no man hath hired them.

Board-school education is all very well, but it is, at present at any rate, overshooting the mark ; trigonometry is one thing, but training men and women is another—training them for a home-life of their own, and seeing that they get it. And what of the girlhood of slumland, the future wives and mothers, utterly ignorant of the commonest duties of womanhood ? Is not this a work for the nation ? A work which would undermine three-fourths of the wretchedness we now deplore ! And is a great nation unequal to this task ? Would not a League of Help be such a uniting of British wisdom, of British common-sense, of British Christian spirit, too, that a hundred ways would be found to train and educate and otherwise elevate the people ? If only we were in earnest ! If only we were really willing ! Be sure at least of this, any such training would be a powerful lever, and a certain road out of slumland.

What, then, is wanted is that we should rise—one and all, Church and City—and join hands. And if there be any sacrifice involved, let us yield it, proving ourselves the true Upper Ten of that wisdom, that righteousness, that greatness of character, that can “die for the people.”

The ancient heathen world was capable of a wondrous amount of patriotism—they could look away from self, for love of their country. Is a great Christian nation not equal to it ?

Yet even noblest patriotism would fall short of the mark; for it is not by what we give, not even by what we do, it is only by what we *are* that we can really help our poor. It is not our alms, not even our self-sacrificing charity, it is in very deed our own true Christianity which is wanted. That is wanted that will teach us to look upon these brokendown folk as brothers indeed—lost and undone brothers maybe, but brothers still. Yes, true love is wanted. And Christian humility is wanted, helping us to come down from our imaginary pedestals.

Do we not know that according to the religion we profess there is neither bondman nor free, neither common people nor gentle folk? Yet how much we think, some of us, not only of our wealth, but of our position, our rank! And what are these but a rag one lays down in death? A true Christian spirit, then, is wanted to regenerate our social life, sweeping away our self-seeking illusions; a confession is wanted that ourselves need saving quite as badly—aye, in many ways—as the poorest of those we would seek to raise. In the Kingdom of God he only is free who is free from all earthly bonds; and he only is great who is least.

* * * * *

Someone having had a glimpse of these pages has expressed a fear lest in these pleadings for the people one advocate a pulling down of the upper classes. Surely not! One is only asking them to come down—a little—of their own accord. In her walks through slumland the writer the other day entered a wretched chamber, inhabited by a miserable woman who had just come in the worse for drink. There she lay, the sad outcome of the things spoken of in these pages. But I looked about the room,

and about the rest of the house with its damp rotten walls, its filthy staircase, and some of the other women collecting—they had just come home from a “mothers’ meeting”—I made my usual inquiries. How hard is life with these women, these mothers, even if they would be good ! That bugbear of heavy rent ever at their door ! There was no landlord in this case, but a landlady, having inherited city property from her father, a Christian woman, a member of a Church that looks after the poor. And by the side of that drunken woman—whose history, who can tell it ? the road by which she had come to filth, and degradation, and drink—my thoughts went ahead, twenty years, thirty years, how long, at most, will it be ? and both this drunken woman and her landlady, with a Christian’s history, will be standing before their Master—the Judge of all—that Christ who so plainly laid down the rules for this life : the drunken woman, possibly, fit for hell only ; and that other woman, her sister, who was her landlady—will there be need for the Judge to speak ? Will she not be looking back herself to that house ? Need a single condemning word be spoken in that Day ? Shall we not know then, every one of us, what we might have done in this life with ourselves, our property, our gifts and opportunities, to make the way to Heaven just a little more easy, a little less full of stumbling-blocks for those by whose toil, whose hunger, we live ? For no one should cast a stone at this landlady ; we are like her in too many things. Wittingly, or unwittingly, it is because of our requirements that many a poor slum-dweller is lost.

* * * * *

This book is urging on a campaign, seeking leaders,

but the Lord of Hosts has His own chosen champions, bringing them very often, whence one least would look for them. "Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble," are called to His battles. "Things despised" often are His instruments, and these He prepares and calls forth in unexpected ways. It is ever "in the fulness of time" that the Lord Himself arises with healing in His wings to carry out His purposes for the nations. Yet well for us if we can be found on His side, furthering and not hindering His rule of righteousness.

And the social question will never be solved aright till the possessing class take it in hand, putting *their* shoulder to the wheel, even if in natural (and national) progress this means being ousted from some of their possessions. For it is better to give up a claim, or even a right, of one's own free-will, and with good grace; there might otherwise be a giving up less pleasant and less gracious. Look at the French Revolution of only a hundred years ago, brought about by the very things we now are deploring here! Is Britain so sure she will never have a similar retribution? She may not—one hopes she may not, because noble hearts, gracious souls, are not altogether wanting in this country; and it is to them one looks! To the possessing class? Yes, yet not to the possessors of wealth and lands only, but the possessors of that other attribute of chivalry, of humanity, of Christianity, of true culture, that lifts them above their more earth-born neighbours, fitting them for a great work.

Is any apology needed? Then the writer can only say she has a rare faith in British readers; there is a greatness of heart about Englishmen and Englishwomen—one dares

tell them the truth ! A friend, knowing something about this forthcoming book, has just been writing : " Don't be afraid to speak out. There are too many mealy-mouthed people. Hit from the shoulder, only let it be in love ! " Well, the writer trusts, if there be any hits about this book, and if they should strike home, it will yet be felt they are hits " in love. "

There are certain seeds with little wings attached to them, taken up by the winds, carried hither and thither, and falling into soil one knows not where. The pleadings of a book are such seed, carried one knows not whither, and falling into hearts one knows not where. And God Himself sends the gentle rain, the quickening sunshine ; there is a growth—a green bud of promise here and there, growing and growing, a harvest springing presently, one knows not how or whence. It is thus with all true work ; it is ever a sowing in hope. And inasmuch as any seed participates in the divine power of life, it is sure to spring up some time, somewhere, though never known, maybe, to the sower till the great Harvest Home. It is with this certain assurance this otherwise unpretending book goes on its way. Had it been possible to write without reference to her former book, the writer might have preferred to send this volume altogether nameless, for truly it is no personal thing ; it is a message. She never went in search of it, never looked for it ; it looked for her. It is a voice crying in the wilderness.

I once heard from a pulpit a little story of the old coaching days, telling how the guard of the cumbrous vehicle, whenever it halted groaning at the bottom of a steep gradient, was wont to ease the toiling horses in this

way : " First class, sit still ; second class, get out and walk ; third class, get out and push ! " The preacher, applying it, of course, to the Christian life, would say that it was just the reverse as regards the Christian activities ; it was third class for a Christian to sit still ; it was at best but second class to carry one's own person only up the hill of progress ; but that it was *first class* to get out and push—helping forward the wheels of God's Kingdom, carrying the burden of others, helping the struggling many up the stony road of earthly trouble and difficulty.

This, of a truth, is the Christian's progress ; and this is how the present book has come by its leading thought.

APPENDIX.

THE concluding chapter of *A Colony of Mercy*, entitled "The Message of Bethel to Ourselves," containing much that is no longer relevant, has been withdrawn from the new issue of that book. The following extracts, however, fitly have a place here. The Bethel Story was written in a Highland cottage, to which the writer had gone, never thinking of tramps; but they crowded about her in such numbers, they just walked into the book, road-born babies and all.

These extracts are "snapshots" from life.

Scarcely a day passes but a dozen of homeless creatures come to the door of this cottage. As a rule they ask modestly for a "piece." But we have known them entering cottage kitchens with simple orders—"Gie us a quarter pound o' tea, half a pound o' sugar, and a joog o' milk!" and *they get it*, as though they were levying contribution. There is quite a superstitious feeling in Highland cottages concerning bounty to these tramps—much to be blamed of course—but might it not be the unconscious sense of kinship? Nay, there is more—the cottager, while present conditions last, never knows but that his own children one day may be on the road—it is this sorrowful sense of kinship! Thus these vagrants are kept in food, their pennies keeping the public-house. We are told they are tinkers; we are told they are gipsies. Gipsies? Then there is a curious cast of the Celt about very many of them. There are Lowland tramps among them, there are even Irish tramps, since there is a homeless Ireland; but a great proportion of them look like simple Highlanders. . . .

Only a few days ago we watched such a roving family—they rested by the roadside, giving their horse a graze—father, mother, and seven children: a baby's curly head peeping out of a rough-and-ready saddlebag, having its cradle on the flanks of the horse, a little girl, and five boys, ranging between six and thirteen, one would judge, barefoot, ragged, and unkempt, otherwise thriving enough, since they beg their food. Beautiful children too, some of them, wild and untamed, with the look on their faces Murillo loved.

Now in the name of Christian Scotland what a state of things! What are these seven children other than animal, other than heathen—never inside a school, never inside a church? We spoke to a minister; we spoke to a poor-law officer. "Can nothing be done?" "Nothing," they said, "for there is no law to embrace this class." . . .

Where do these people spend the nights? the many drenching days? the cold winter? About a fortnight ago—it

was in the latter end of September, there had been a heavy frost, unusually early, and touching well-nigh every sheaf of the yet ungarnered crop, to the hurt of the poor tenant only, for it makes no difference to the landlord's rent—a vagrant knocked at this cottage door for a cup of tea in the early morning, and he had it. He was all covered with the hoarfrost, hair, tatters, and all.

"Poor fellow, where have you spent this grim night?"

"*In the wood.*"

"It's the drink has done this for you," says the wife who gives him the cup.

"Yes, the drink and my own foolish ways. I cannot help it now. I shall drink again when I can earn some money."

What an appalling state of things: spending the night in the wood—such a night—coming for a cup of cottage tea, and going his way again, *knowing he has sinned!* . . .

We could almost write a book on Scottish tramps, from the observation of a few weeks only. Yesterday a woman accosted us with a bundle in her arms. It was an infant, four days old. "Goodness sake! and where was it born?" "On the road, please: I couldn't get no further." A lazy lout of a husband with a pony and a troop of children was bringing up the rear. We have not a word to say for the work-shirking tramp; but in the name of universal motherhood who could look unmoved at that bundle? The state of the road this week past has been one deluge, an unusual downpour even for Scotland; and here was a woman who had not even an umbrella cottage* to receive a little stranger in. Here it was, four days old, and she already on the tramp again, having walked seven miles since the morning. We know she spoke truth in this, for the child has been registered in the place she named—the law seeing to that much of a tramp's life. What could we do but take her, deserving or not, to our cottage? We got her story out of her. She married at seventeen a fellow of nineteen, and they have been on the road ever since, this being the ninth of their children. Why did they take to the road? Well, her people had always been tramping, his people had been crofters till the cottage fell down about their ears—no repairs, no new cottage—and his father dying, he took to the road. This is a state of things! the unhoused cottar, then, it would seem, goes towards the making of a gipsy in Scotland! She said they were gipsies, and her weatherworn complexion was "gipsy" enough; but she had the clear blue eye of the Highlander—no true gipsy from Adam ever had blue eyes. Did she

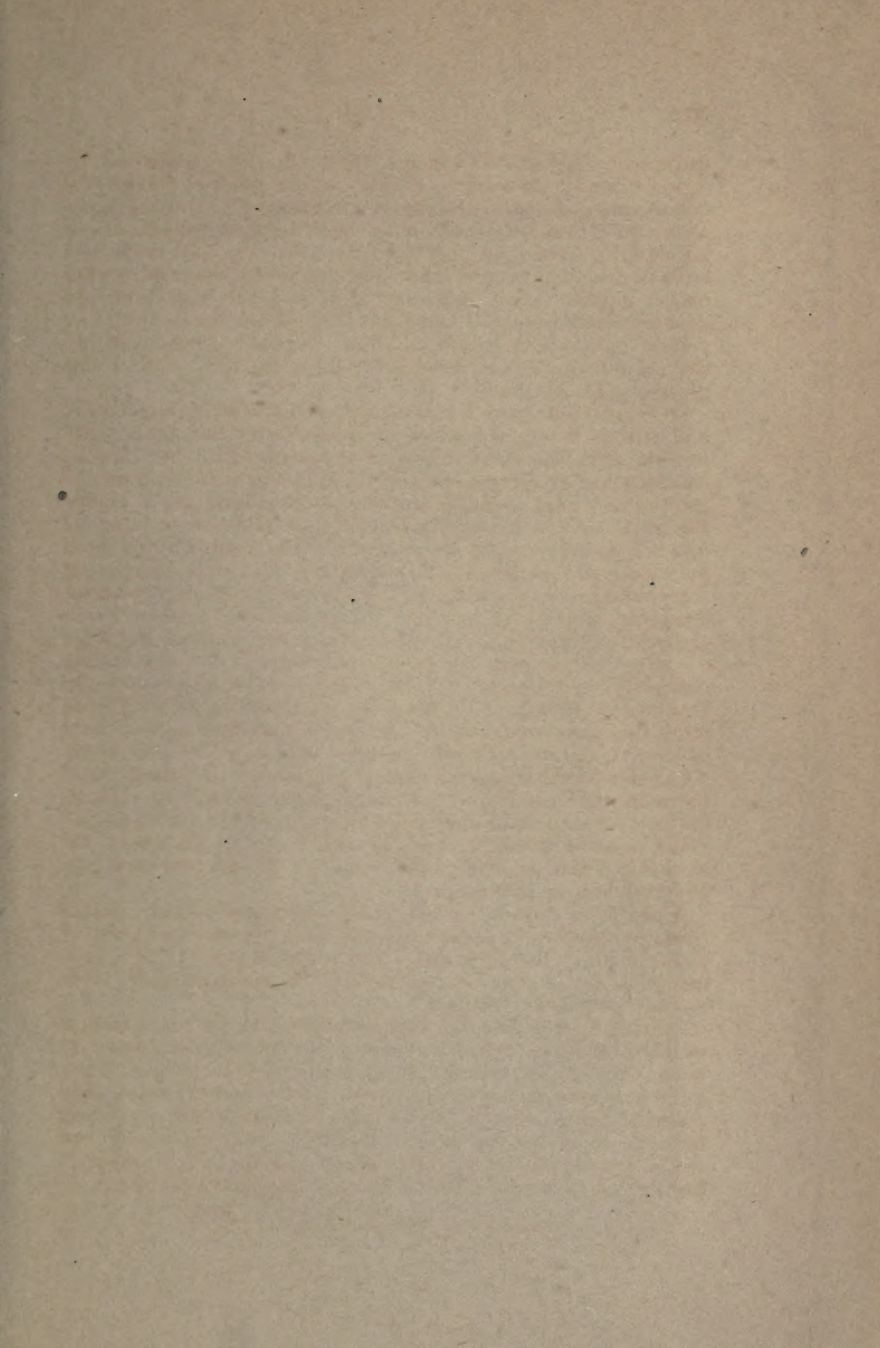
* Referring to certain cottages in the Highlands in which a great landlord's tenants on wet nights have to put up an umbrella over their beds to keep them dry.

think she was a *real* gipsy? But all she understood by "gipsy" was "*the road*." What was her name? "Both the 'man' (mân, she said) and mysel' are Stuarts." And she knew about their people on both sides back to great-grandfather—all Stuarts—the royal clan actually. We are told there is a tribe of so-called Stuarts who have always intermarried, always been "gipsies" since time out of mind. But that blue eye does not hail from the Ganges, nor does the sandy wig, half yellow, half red, of those children. Stuart or not, what are they, if not the hapless residue of Old Scotland? And is this gipsydom to continue?

Of course not many hours passed after this tramping family had left us before we knew our pitiful soul had been sadly duped. The woman had been to the manse with her bundle, carefully hiding all trace of the clothing and other bounty the good minister's wife had given her, before calling for a repetition of the same at our hands. And an hour or so later we met her again a couple of miles down the road, we protected by waterproof and umbrella, she sitting cheerfully in the wet with that four-day bundle, having a cottage wife after her with sympathy and supplies. She will repeat that trick a dozen times tramping along, that infant being her stock-in-trade for a while. As we came up to her she pointed to some smoke rising fifty yards further: "That's the mân, getting camp ready, I canna get further." Indeed she had done well with nine miles that day, considering. We walked on, and getting hold of the "mân" by himself, we gave him a bit of our mind "You should work instead of dragging about the woman and bairn in that condition." "She is awfu' weak," he replied. "Yes, but an able-bodied man like you should be working." "She is awfu' weak!" And say what we would about *his* working, "She is awfu' weak," was all the response we got. We gave him up in despair.

A couple of days after writing this we actually had a letter from this tramp—he apparently having got someone to act as clerk for him—thanking us for our interest, etc. If this, in a tramp, is not a trait of clan royal! He signed himself with his own pot-hooks, "Stuart."

Getting back to our own temporary fireside, we heard from a woman of these parts who had been to that parish seven miles off, where this four-day infant first saw the light, that this part of the story was true enough; the parish doctor had attended that roadside arrival in the gipsy's half-egg-shaped tent, and when he came to revisit his patient the second day she was on her feet and away to the "public," infant and all, for a "drappie," feeling "awfu' weak." This is Darkest Scotland tramping.





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Author [Sutter, Julie]

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